

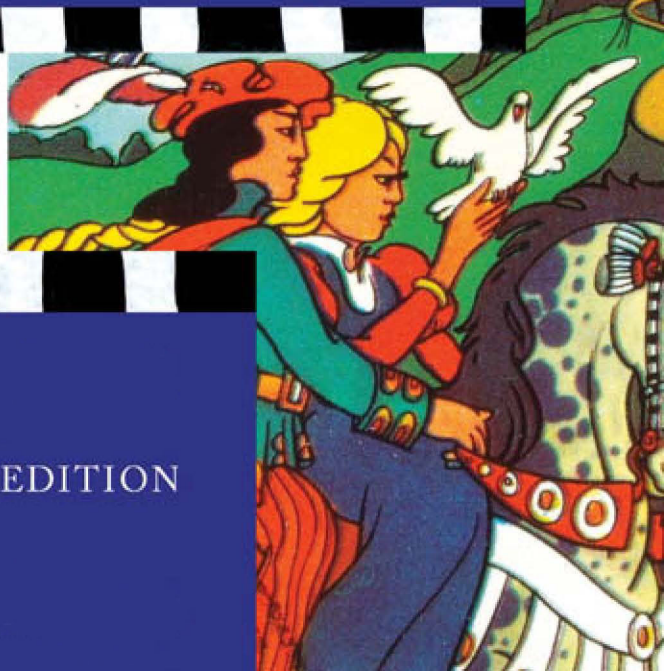


FOLKLORE

An Encyclopedia of Beliefs,
Customs, Tales, Music, and Art

CHARLIE T. MCCORMICK AND
KIM KENNEDY WHITE, EDITORS

Foreword by Thomas A. Green



SECOND EDITION

Folklore

Folklore

AN ENCYCLOPEDIA OF BELIEFS,
CUSTOMS, TALES, MUSIC, AND ART

Second Edition

Charlie T. McCormick and Kim Kennedy White, Editors



Santa Barbara, California • Denver, Colorado • Oxford, England

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About the Editors

CHARLIE T. MCCORMICK, PhD, is currently the vice president for academic affairs and provost at Schreiner University in Kerrville, Texas. Previously, he was professor of folklore and English at Cabrini College in Radnor, Pennsylvania.

KIM KENNEDY WHITE, PhD, is an independent folklorist and an acquisitions editor at ABC-CLIO. She has taught courses in folklore, mythology, children's and folk literature, education, research, and writing.

List of Contributors

Robert Ackerman
University of the Arts

Linda Kinsey Adams
Indiana University

Randal S. Allison
Texas A&M University

Maribel Alvarez
University of Arizona

Richard W. Anderson
Oregon State University

Pertti Anttonen
University of Helsinki

Satu Apo
University of Helsinki

D. L. Ashliman
Emeritus, University of Pittsburgh

Andrea Austin
Wilfrid Laurier University

Ronald L. Baker
Indiana State University

Amanda Carson Banks
Vanderbilt University

Paul Barber
*Fowler Museum of Cultural
History*

Haya Bar-Itzhak
University of Haifa

Dan Ben-Amos
University of Pennsylvania

Mark Bender
Ohio State University

Regina Bendix
University of Pennsylvania

Anne Richman Beresin
University of Pennsylvania

Robert D. Bethke
University of Delaware

Katherine Borland
Ohio State University

Zoe Borovsky
University of Oregon

Margaret K. Brady
University of Utah

Simon J. Bronner
*Pennsylvania State University,
Harrisburg*

Margaret Bruchez
Blinn College

Peggy Bulger
American Folklife Center

Richard Allen Burns
Arkansas State University

Charles Camp
Maryland State Arts Council

Peter J. Claus
California State University

William M. Clements
Arkansas State University

Cati Coe
Rutgers University

Keith Cunningham
Northern Arizona University

Wei Ming Dariotis
San Francisco State University

Hilda Ellis Davidson
University of Cambridge

Frank de Caro
Louisiana State University

Linda Dégh
Indiana University

D. Bruce Dickson
Texas A&M University

John Dorst
University of Wyoming

Kristina Downs
University of Indiana, Bloomington

Thomas A. DuBois
University of Washington

Eric Eliason
Brigham Young University

Bill Ellis
Pennsylvania State University

Hasan El-Shamy
Indiana University

Holly Everett
Memorial University of Newfoundland

Elizabeth Faier
Zayed University

Alessandro Falassi
University for Foreigners of Siena

Claire R. Farrer
California State University, Chico

Gary Alan Fine
University of Georgia

John Miles Foley
University of Missouri

Georgia Fox
Texas A&M University

Melissa Frazier
Cabrini College

Peter J. García
Arizona State University, Tempe

Leslie C. Gay Jr.
University of Tennessee

Mark Glazer
Pan-American University

Chris Goertzen
*University of Southern
Mississippi*

Christine Goldberg
Independent Scholar

Inna Golovakha-Hicks
Ukrainian Academy of Sciences

Joseph P. Goodwin
Ball State University

Thomas A. Green
Texas A&M University

Pauline Greenhill
University of Winnipeg

Sylvia Grider
Texas A&M University

Stephanie A. Hall
American Folklife Center

Lauri Harvilahti
University of Helsinki

Stanley E. Henning
Independent Scholar

Dana Hercbergs
Siegal College

Robert Glenn Howard
*University of Wisconsin,
Madison*

David J. Hufford
Pennsylvania State University

Bruce Jackson
State University of New York, Buffalo

Nan Johnson
Ohio State University

Michael Owen Jones
University of California, Los Angeles

Rosan Augusta Jordan
Louisiana State University

Jeana Jorgensen
Indiana University, Bloomington

Eunhyun Kim
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Linda Kim
University of California, Riverside

Barbro Klein
Stockholm University

Krista Kroslowitz
Cabrini College

Michael Lange
Champlain College

Kimberly J. Lau
University of California, Santa Cruz

Stephanie P. Ledgin
Independent Scholar

David Leeming
Emeritus, University of Connecticut, Storrs

James R. Lewis
University of Wisconsin

William E. Lightfoot
Appalachian State University

Timothy C. Lloyd
Cityfolk

Ronald Loewe
California State University, Long Beach

Suzanne P. MacAulay
University of Colorado at Colorado Springs

Marsha MacDowell
Michigan State University Museum

Martin J. Manning
U.S. Department of State

Heather Maring
Arizona State University

Howard Wight Marshall
University of Missouri

Ulrich Marzolph
Georg-August-University

Babacar M'Baye
Kent State University

Robert McCarl
Boise State University

Theo Meder
Meertens Instituut

Wolfgang Mieder
University of Vermont

Rosina S. Miller
University of Pennsylvania, Center for Folklore & Ethnography

Thomas R. Miller
Columbia University

James Moreira
Memorial University of Newfoundland

Tom Mould
Elon University

Francesca M. Muccini
Belmont University

Joanne Mulcahy
Lewis and Clark College

Patrick B. Mullen
Ohio State University

W. F. H. Nicolaisen
King's College, Aberdeen

Dorothy Noyes
University of Pennsylvania

Kathleen Malone O'Connor
University of Pennsylvania

Dáithí Ó hÓgáin
University College Dublin

Felix J. Oinas
Indiana University

Ted Olson
*East Tennessee State
University*

Gilda Baeza Ortego
Texas A&M University

Jaelyn Ozzimo
Cabrini College

Juha Pentikäinen
University of Helsinki

Thomas Pettit
Odense University

Melissa Phillips
Cabrini College

Leah Carson Powell
Independent Scholar

Cathy Lynn Preston
University of Colorado

Michael J. Preston
University of Colorado

Leonard Norman Primiano
Cabrini College

Frank Proschan
Indiana University

Brian Regal
Kean University

Roger deV. Renwick
University of Texas, Austin

Brynley F. Roberts
Emeritus, University of Wales

Warren Roberts
Indiana University

Danielle M. Roemer
Northern Kentucky University

Owen Ronström
Independent Scholar

Neil V. Rosenberg
*Memorial University of
Newfoundland*

Klaus Roth
Munich University

Rachelle H. Saltzman
Iowa Arts Council

Jack Santino
Bowling Green State University

Patricia E. Sawin
University of Southwestern Louisiana

Gregory Schrempf
Indiana University

Graham Seal
Curtin University of Technology

Sharon R. Sherman
University of Oregon

Brian Shinehouse
Cabrini College

Pravina Shukla
Indiana University

Amy Shuman
Ohio State University

Carole G. Silver
Yeshiva University

Michèle Simonsen
University of Copenhagen

Amy E. Skillman
Institute for Cultural Partnerships

Guntis Šmidchens
University of Washington

Paul Smith
*Memorial University of
Newfoundland*

Joseph Daniel Sobol
East Tennessee State University

Emily Socolov
Independent Scholar

Brian Stableford
University College Winchester

Virginia E. Swain
Dartmouth College

Richard Sweterlitsch
University of Vermont

Timothy R. Tangherlini
*University of California,
Los Angeles*

Gerald Thomas
*Memorial University of
Newfoundland*

Jeff Todd Titon
Brown University

Peter Tokofsky
University of California, Los Angeles

Rebecca L. Torstrick
Indiana University South Bend

Tad Tuleja
Independent Scholar

Edith Turner
University of Virginia

Kay Turner
Brooklyn Arts Council

Leea Virtanen
University of Helsinki

John Michael Vlach
George Washington University

Nancy L. Watterson
Cabrini College

Linda S. Watts
University of Washington

Mickey Weems
*Columbus State Community
College*

Elizabeth E. Wein
Independent Scholar

Kathryn E. Wilson
University of Pennsylvania

Margaret R. Yocom
George Mason University

Don Yoder
University of Pennsylvania

Ayako Yoshimura
University of Wisconsin, Madison

Katherine Young
University of California, Berkeley

M. Jane Young
University of New Mexico

Foreword

Almost twenty years ago, I was audacious (or naïve) enough to accept the challenge to edit a folklore encyclopedia that could serve as a comprehensive reference work for general readers, students, and academic researchers. I survived only because of the editorial guidance of Gary Kuris of ABC-CLIO and the mentorship of my editorial board: Roger D. Abrahams, Linda Dégh, Henry Glassie, Sylvia Grider, Bruce Jackson, and Juha Pentikäinen. In developing the list of entries and the perspectives from which contributors would consider these topics, we decided to focus on forms and methods developed in the discipline of folklore and those derived from related fields such as anthropology and linguistics. Biographical entries and character types (“Bluebeard,” for example) were avoided in order to permit the inclusion of a larger number of genres, customs, and theoretical perspectives within 350,000–400,000 words projected for the two-volume work. For the writing of these entries, the board members were joined by an international roster of over eighty other contributors, including both younger scholars and academics whose reputations had been established for decades. The result was *Folklore: An Encyclopedia of Beliefs, Customs, Music, and Art*.

At this writing, our younger contributors have joined the ranks of the established scholars and the latter maintain their prestige, just as their contributions to *Folklore* remain reliable guides to the topics addressed. Thanks to the group effort, the reference has proved useful enough for the publisher to propose a second, revised edition expanded to more than 500,000 words. As with many other things, I felt once was enough. Therefore, I nominated one of the contributors to the 1997 encyclopedia, Charlie T. McCormick, to take on the second iteration. Charlie agreed to serve as coeditor along with Kim Kennedy White. The task they set for themselves was to survey the existing encyclopedia entries, to revise any that required an update, to eliminate any that were no longer relevant in the twenty-first century (very few, I am happy to report), and to add new entries to address concepts that had been overlooked in the first edition or that had gained prominence over the years since its publication, and to add entries that could support the original collection. For example, “Globalization,” “Hybrid,” and “Shape-shifting” could have fit easily into the framework of the first edition and

are welcome additions here. “Cyberculture” and “Internet” join the original entry on “Computer-mediated Folklore,” a piece that was considered cutting edge in 1997. After all, the Internet was not really defined until 1995; Google was founded in 1998, and YouTube has only been with us since 2005. All have profoundly influenced folklore and the ways in which folklorists conduct research. The term “Postfolklore” (which was introduced into Russian folkloristics in the late twentieth century) has gained currency since the first edition and now appears in the revised encyclopedia. “Martial Arts and Folklore” and “Environmentalism” recognize the fact that both areas now attract the attention of folklore scholars. The second edition’s editors also have chosen to devote some of the additional space to providing specific examples of more generalized entries: “Ethnic Folklore” and “Hero/Heroine, Folk,” for example. Therefore, entries devoted to specific ethnic groups and regions (African, African American, Asian, the Arab Gulf States, etc.) and individual folk heroes and heroines and heroic types (e.g., “William Tell,” “Dragonslayers”) were added.

The editors of the revised edition have reconsidered the configuration of the first edition in minor, but significant, ways. Overall, the alphabetical organization of the original publication has been retained. In some cases, however, shorter, more specific entries have been repositioned to serve as sidebars to major entries. Therefore, “Evil Eye,” “Luck,” and “Omen/Portent” have been rearranged to supplement the major entry “Folk Belief.”

New authors appear in the second edition. David Leeming (“Creation Myth”), Don Yoder (“Pennsylvania Dutch”), and Warren Roberts (“Thompson, Stith”) need no introduction to folklorists, and their contributions in their areas of expertise will likely become required reading for novices in the discipline. The inclusion of other contributors enriches the diversity of *Folklore*, particularly in Asian, Asian American, and Latino traditions.

The result is an updated and fleshed-out version of the first edition. As was the case with the 1997 edition, reviewers and the editors themselves (after a well-deserved rest) will look back on their efforts and wish for the inclusion of some overlooked entry or question the decision to include “this rather than that.” Unfortunately, despite the name, encyclopedias can only aspire to being encyclopedic. Editors make their best choices given the choices available under the circumstances at hand. Editors Charlie T. McCormick and Kim Kennedy White have successfully managed to add significant content to *Folklore: An Encyclopedia of Beliefs, Customs, Music, and Art* while preserving the intent and the best content of the original. I applaud their efforts.

Thomas A. Green

Standard Folklore Indices and Classifications

The following works are cited within entries in the short forms shown in brackets.

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A

Academic Programs in Folklore, International

Research, teaching, and study of folklore as a formal academic discipline outside North America. Any investigation into the current status of folklore and of its discernible progress in the academic world internationally is, from the very outset, apt to run into terminological problems as well as organizational variations. The term *folklore* for the discipline and/or for the materials the discipline studies, though originating in English in William Thoms's famous letter to *Antheam* of 1846, has not found general acceptance in university circles in the British Isles. Currently, it is used only in the official title of the Department of Irish Folklore in University College Dublin, the department being a direct descendant of the former Irish Folklore Commission. The preferred term elsewhere, in the few academic institutions in which folklore is a recent newcomer to the curriculum (Edinburgh, Cardiff), is *ethnology*. Sometimes, this term also is used in Scandinavia, as in the title of the journal *Ethnologia Europaea*, but *folkliv*, *folkminne/folkeminde*, *folkekultur*, *folkedigtning*, and the like also occur in institutional titles. In some instances, these terms imply a strict separation of the study of material and nonmaterial culture, and the relationship of this group of terms to the use of *ethnology* is not always clear.

Sometimes, the latter is understood to be the umbrella term; at other times, it is thought of as coequal with folklore. Relevant chairs or institutes in universities in German- or Dutch/Flemish-speaking countries usually are designated by the term *Volkskunde*, generally in deliberate juxtaposition to *Ethnologie*; in the former socialist countries, *ethnography* predominates. In Greece, we find *lagrophia*, and in Italy, *storia delle tradizioni popolari* as well as *etnografia*. The term *ethnology* is frequently qualified by the epithet *regional*, and other designations restrict the scope of inquiries to areas and groups within national borders. The Finno-Ugric countries have their own terminologies.

These and other variations on the surface appear to point to a fragmented discipline, but in reality, they hide a remarkable singleness of purpose. The activities generated and the subject matter studied all have some bearing on, and are frequently roughly identical with, what in North America is termed *folklore*. They can, therefore, legitimately be included in any attempt to measure the status of and programmatic development in this field of study. Apparently, there has never been a global survey of the teaching of folklore in academic institutions,

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and no systematic inquiry has been conducted in Europe since the late 1960s. Two surveys were undertaken, however, in 1953–1954 and in 1965, the former on behalf of the Commission Internationale des Arts et Traditions Populaires (CIAP) and the latter in conjunction with its successor, the Société Internationale d’Ethnologie et de Folklore (SIEF). These surveys yield a certain amount of information with regard to the presence of folklore studies in European institutions of higher learning.

The 1965 survey, for example, ascertained that, at that time, there were about 150 chairs-cum-institutes in “folklore” in European academic establishments. In some countries, practically every university offered courses and conducted research in the subject; in others, formal offerings were more sporadic or nonexistent. It also was quite common for the pursuit of folklore studies to be linked to or incorporated within departments devoted to adjacent areas of academic endeavor (e.g., geography, cultural history, German), rather than conducted within independent departments. It would be misleading, however, to gauge the presence and development of folklore studies in Europe solely in terms of the universities, for much research in the field in the last two centuries has been carried out by individuals or clusters of individuals attached to academies, archives, and museums; many of the incumbents of related research posts also have had part-time or honorary lecturing positions in universities. A rich crop of publications testifies to the range and intensity of the research carried out by individual scholars or as cooperative ventures.

One reason why development and evolution are so difficult to measure for the field of folklore studies involves the change in direction that the discipline has undergone in certain parts of Europe, especially in reaction to the politicization of the topic in the 1930s and early 1940s. A sociological orientation is now not unusual, often coupled with expressions of a social conscience. The investigation of modern phenomena often takes precedence over more traditionally oriented approaches. In a sense, such directional shifts may be interpreted as progressive, as may the increase in the number of students entering this field. Occupational opportunities in the public sector are practically nonexistent in Europe, unlike the United States.

The most obvious advance in academic folklore on the international scene has been through joint projects such as the *European Folklore Atlas*, the *International Folklore Bibliography*, and the *International Dictionary of Regional European Ethnology and Folklore*; through conferences and symposia organized, in most instances, by national and international scholarly societies such as CIAP and SIEF, the International Society for Folk-Narrative Research, or the fledgling International Society for Contemporary Legend Research, or through the summer schools organized by the revitalized Folklore Fellows of Helsinki. Within SIEF, the Ballad Commission has been particularly successful in arranging annual symposia that have resulted in fruitful personal contact among scholars not only

within Europe but also across the Atlantic. Therefore, in terms of a wide definition of what folklore is and of what folklorists do, it can be said that the research, teaching, and study of the subject undoubtedly are prospering in much of Europe, and the current situation can with justification be described as encouraging.

W. F. H. Nicolaisen

See Also Academic Programs in Folklore, North American.

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Erixon, Sigurd. 1955. The Position of Regional Ethnology and Folklore at the European Universities: An International Inquiry. *Laos* 3: 108 144.

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Academic Programs in Folklore, North American

History and development of folklore programs in North American colleges and universities. The academic study of folklore and folklife has made considerable progress since 1940 when Ralph Steele Boggs reported only twenty-three U.S. colleges and universities with folklore courses; however, departments or even mini-departments of folklore projected in the late 1960s and early 1970s and degree-granting programs in folklore have not developed. Most academic folklorists teach folklore courses in departments other than folklore, typically in English and anthropology departments or in American studies programs.

In North American colleges and universities, folklore was first taught by literary scholars as part of literature and philology courses. This literary study of folklore began at Harvard University around 1856 when Francis James Child began collecting English and Scottish folk ballads from books, broadsides, and manuscripts. Although Child did not develop separate folklore courses or a folklore program, he incorporated folklore in his English courses, created the Folklore Collection in the Harvard College Library, and trained several notable U.S. folklorists, including George Lyman Kittredge, successor to Child's English professorship in 1894. Through the efforts of Child and Kittredge, Harvard became the center for the literary study of folklore in North America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and it remains a center for the comparative study of oral literature today. Bartlett Jere Whiting and others carried on Child's and Kittredge's tradition of library research in folk literature, and in the 1930s, Milman Parry and Albert B. Lord initiated field research in European oral epics,

leading to the development of the Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature now in the Harvard College Library. The university's Center for the Study of Oral Literature supports graduate study in allied areas and complements Harvard's undergraduate degree program in folklore and mythology, awarded through its Committee on Degrees in Folklore and Mythology.

In 1883, Franz Boas was beginning fieldwork among the Eskimos of Baffinland, and by 1888, he was serving on the faculty of Clark University and collecting folklore from Native Americans in British Columbia. In 1899, Boas began a long career as an anthropology professor at Columbia University, which, through his reputation, became the center for the anthropological study of folklore in North America. Inspired by Boas, several of his students—including Robert H. Lowie, Ruth Benedict, Melville Herskovits, and Melville Jacobs—and other anthropologists began to incorporate folklore, especially Native American folklore, into their courses. Boas also encouraged scholars such as Marius Barbeau, who collected French-Canadian folklore, to study North American ethnic traditions. After Boas retired, Ruth Benedict and George Herzog combined efforts to keep Columbia a center of folklore activity well into the middle of the twentieth century.

The academic study of folklore also is indebted to a group of Americanists—Perry Miller, F. O. Matthiessen, Bernard DeVoto, Ralph Barton Perry, and Howard Mumford Jones—who established the first degree-granting program in American studies at Harvard in 1937. These Harvard Americanists expanded the study of American literature and culture from an emphasis on formal culture to include folk and popular cultures. They also established a place for folklore within interdisciplinary American studies programs, which today rank third after English and anthropology among departments and programs offering folklore courses at U.S. institutions. Although the early literary folklorists stressed the library study of older European folklore and the anthropological folklorists emphasized the field study of tribal traditions, the Americanists promoted the interdisciplinary study of American folk cultures against a background of American cultural history.

The first department of folklore in the United States was established at Franklin and Marshall College in 1948 when Alfred L. Shoemaker was appointed assistant professor of American folklore. Although the department was called the Department of American Folklore, the program was based on European folklife and *Volk-skunde* models, and four of the six courses offered dealt with Pennsylvania folklore and folklife. Franklin and Marshall's short-lived folklore department first appeared in the catalog for 1949–1950 but remained in the catalog only through 1951–1952.

Although separate courses in folklore were introduced at several universities in the 1920s and 1930s, a degree-granting program in folklore did not exist until 1940 when Ralph Steele Boggs founded an interdisciplinary curriculum in folklore, offering a master's degree and a doctoral minor, at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Professor Boggs, a specialist in Latin American folklore, also

spread the study of folklore to Mexico, where he introduced folklore studies and taught a folklore techniques course at the National University in 1945. Through its curriculum in folklore, the University of North Carolina remains one of the leading centers for the study of folklore in North America. Supported by major research collections—including the papers of D. K. Wilgus, the labor song collection of Archie Green, the Southern Folklife Collection, the John Edwards Memorial Collection, and the American Religious Tunebook Collection—and a large library collection in southern literature and culture, the North Carolina program is especially strong in the study of folksong and southern folklife. The program also emphasizes African American folklore, ethnographic filmmaking, occupational folklore, public sector folklore, and immigrant folklore. The curriculum in folklore at North Carolina is designed mainly for graduate students, though undergraduates may put together an interdisciplinary degree with an area in folklore.

Trained by Kittredge and inspired by the historic-geographic studies of the Finnish folklorists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Stith Thompson, who joined the English faculty at Indiana University in 1921, introduced the first folklore course there in 1923 and directed a number of folklore theses and dissertations of graduate students in the English department. Thompson founded the first U.S. doctoral program in folklore, emphasizing the comparative study of folk narratives, at Indiana University in 1949. After Thompson's retirement in 1955, his successor, Richard M. Dorson, expanded the concept of folklore studies at Indiana and elevated an expanded folklore program to departmental status in 1963. A graduate of the Harvard program in the history of American civilization, Dorson provided an Americanist orientation for a generation of folklorists trained at Indiana University between 1957 and 1981. Warren E. Roberts, Thompson's protégé in comparative folktale studies and recipient of the first U.S. doctorate in folklore in 1953, introduced the first course in material culture at Indiana in 1961; he also contributed significantly to broadening the scope of the Indiana program, which now combines humanistic and social scientific approaches. The program emphasizes theoretical approaches to folklore and, true to its comparative heritage, continues to cover many of the world's folk traditions. A program in ethnomusicology within the department and the renowned Archives of Traditional Music strengthen the teaching and research programs. Nearly 60 percent of all university teachers of folklore who hold doctorates in the subject have been trained at Indiana University.

Under the direction of MacEdward Leach, the University of Pennsylvania introduced the second U.S. doctoral program in folklore in 1959. After receiving a PhD in Middle English literature at the University of Pennsylvania in 1930, Leach remained on the university's English faculty and changed an epic and short story course into an introductory folklore course and a literary ballad course into a folk ballad course. Eventually, Leach developed an interdisciplinary graduate program in folklore at the University of Pennsylvania and trained a number

of folklorists, including Kenneth S. Goldstein, who eventually became chair of the program. At first, studies in ballads and folksongs and in folklore and literary relations were emphasized in the university's program; however, by the time Leach retired in 1966, the Department of Folklore and Folklife had developed into a broad program covering the entire range of folklore studies. Influenced by sociolinguistic approaches and the ethnography of communication, the program stresses social scientific approaches to folklore. Presently, around a third of all university teachers of folklore who hold doctorates in the subject received their training at the University of Pennsylvania.

Today, only two universities in the United States—Indiana and Pennsylvania—have folklore departments, but the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) is another major center for the study of folklore in North America. UCLA first offered a folklore course in 1933 when Sigurd B. Hustvedt, another student of Kittredge, introduced a graduate course in the traditional ballad. In 1937, Wayland D. Hand, a specialist in folk belief and custom, joined the German faculty, and two years later, he introduced a general folklore course. Under Hand's direction, an interdepartmental folklore program was established in 1954, offering around two dozen courses in folklore and related areas. Currently, the Folklore and Mythology Program at UCLA awards interdisciplinary master's and doctoral degrees in folklore and mythology. The interdisciplinary nature of the UCLA program gives it identity and strength, for students may choose from over seventy-five folklore and allied courses in departments throughout the university. A research institute, the Center for the Study of Comparative Folklore and Mythology, and other university research centers strengthen UCLA's teaching program.

In Canada, Memorial University of Newfoundland and Université Laval have folklore programs, one anglophone and the other francophone, and both programs award doctoral degrees in folklore. In 1962, Herbert Halpert, a student of Benedict and Herzog at Columbia and of Thompson at Indiana, joined the Memorial faculty, and through the encouragement and support of place names scholar E. R. Seary, head of the Department of English, he developed a folklore program within the Department of English. In 1968, Halpert founded the Department of Folklore, which now offers a full range of folklore courses and emphasizes a balanced approach to folklore studies. Three archives support the teaching mission: the Centre d'Études Franco-Terreneuviennes, the Centre for Material Culture Studies, and the Folklore and Language Archive. Université Laval, with folklore studies dating from 1944 when Luc Lacourcière was appointed to a chair in folklore, offers courses and undergraduate and graduate degrees in folklore through its *programmes d'arts et traditions populaires* in the Département d'Histoire. Laval's program emphasizes French folklore in North America.

Several universities offer the doctoral degree in folklore including Indiana, Memorial, Laval, Missouri, Ohio State, Pennsylvania, and UCLA. Other institutions

offer the PhD with a concentration in folklore, but the MA degree in folklore is more common in North America. In addition to master's programs in folklore at Alberta, George Mason, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Laval, Louisiana, Memorial, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio State, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas A&M, University of Texas at Austin, UCLA, and Utah, a master's in folklore also is offered in the Department of Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley, and a master's in folk arts is offered through the Tamburitzans Institute of Folk Arts in the School of Music at Duquesne University. Western Kentucky's program in folk studies is housed in the Department of Modern Languages and Intercultural Studies and offers an undergraduate minor as well as a master's in folk studies. Furthermore, several institutions offer the bachelor's degree with a major, minor, and concentrations in folklore including Arkansas, George Mason, Georgia, Harvard, Idaho State, Indiana, Memorial, Ohio State, Utah State, and the Universities of Alberta, Hawaii, Kentucky, North Carolina, Oregon, and Wisconsin.

At least eighty North American institutions offer majors in other disciplines (notably, English, anthropology, and American studies) that permit either a folklore minor or a folklore concentration. These programs range from formal curricula to informal concentrations at all degree levels. For example, an MA and a PhD in anthropology or English with a folklore concentration is offered at the University of Texas, Austin, and undergraduates there may design a special concentration in folklore. Undergraduate majors as well as graduate majors in anthropology at Texas A & M University also may elect a concentration in folklore. Degrees in folklore at the University of Oregon are coordinated through its Folklore and Ethnic Studies Program, which is supported by the Randall V. Mills Archive of Northwest Folklore. At Oregon, master's students create their own plans of study through individualized programs, and doctoral students may elect folklore as an area in English or anthropology. Through its Program in Folklore, Mythology, and Film Studies, the State University of New York, Buffalo awards an MA in English or humanities and a PhD in English with a folklore and mythology concentration.

George Washington University's Folklife Program grants an MA in American studies or anthropology and a PhD in American studies with a concentration in traditional material culture. Well situated in Washington, DC, the Folklife Program utilizes the resources of the Smithsonian Institution, the American Folklife Center, and other museums, libraries, archives, and historical societies in the area. The Folklore Program at Utah State University is administered through the American Studies Program, and undergraduate and master's degrees in American studies with a folklore emphasis are offered. Folklore concentrations also are available in history or English at Utah State.

Master's candidates may elect areas in general folklore, public folklore, or applied history/museology. Ohio State University has offered folklore courses

since the 1930s and now has a Center for Folklore and Cultural Studies, allowing undergraduate and graduate students a folklore concentration in an interdisciplinary program. A folklore archives and the Francis Lee Utley Collection in the university library support the academic program, which emphasizes folklore and literary relations and narrative theory.

Although more folklore courses are offered in English and, to a lesser degree, anthropology departments than in any other departments or programs, folklore courses are found in a wide variety of academic departments and programs, from architecture to women's studies. At a number of institutions, folklore courses, often cross-listed, are housed in more than one department. Though degrees in folklore and departments of folklore have not developed to the extent anticipated in the late 1960s and early 1970s, folklore courses and concentrations in allied departments and programs, after a slow beginning, have increased significantly in North America since that time. Public institutions, doctoral-granting institutions, and large institutions are more likely to offer folklore courses than private institutions, two-year institutions, and small institutions.

Ronald L. Baker

See Also Academic Programs in Folklore, International.

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Acculturation

Cultural modification of groups' and individuals' material culture, behaviors, beliefs, and values caused by borrowing from or adapting to other cultures. Whenever cultures regularly contact one another, change takes place in a limited number of ways: One group may destroy the other, one may completely adopt the other's culture and become a part of it, the two may merge to create a fusion culture, or both may adapt and borrow from one another. The group that is politically or economically subordinate to the other usually does the most immediate and extensive borrowing. Major references to the subject of acculturation include the "Exploratory Formulation" published by H. G. Barnett and colleagues in 1954 as the result of a Social Science Research Council Summer Seminar and the report of a 1979 symposium sponsored by the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

The process of acculturation, without a doubt, has been going on as long as cultures have been coming in contact with one another, and the concept of acculturation was first employed in a manner close to its present sense as early as the 1880s. But acculturation has been the subject of a good deal of intensive analysis in the fields of cultural study only since the 1930s. The emphasis that led to closer scholarly examination of acculturation, particularly in the United States, grew out of the earlier concern for salvaging so-called memory-cultures and the assumption that "pure" cultures that had not been "contaminated" by acculturation were somehow superior and more important. In 1936, a committee appointed by the Social Science Research Council and consisting of Robert Redfield, chair, Ralph Linton, and Melville J. Herskovits published a three-page "Memorandum for the Study of Acculturation" that urged special attention to the matter and the exchange of information gathered on the subject by researchers working with different cultures. There is little evidence that the sort of exchange among researchers that Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits anticipated took place, but the call greatly affected the course of cultural study. Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits themselves heeded the call, and each of them wrote classic books on acculturation.

From the research of the committee members and that inspired by their report emerged many important studies and widely accepted conclusions concerning acculturation. It is, first of all, important to note that the term *acculturation* as used within the fields of cultural analysis refers only to change that comes about by borrowing, although popular usage also applies the term to the process of socialization by which individuals (usually children) learn to function within their own culture. As it is used within anthropology and folklore, the term *acculturation* usually is limited to changes caused by intercultural influences that affect and modify a broad range of the deep structures of culture; the term

diffusion is used to describe changes that take place in individual elements or parts of cultures adopted without change. The Navajo and Zuni tribes of the U.S. Southwest, for example, have been in close contact for several hundred years and have experienced a good deal of diffusion, but their total sociocultural systems seem to have been little acculturated by one another because the two cultures share a long-standing tradition of mutual hospitality and reciprocity—“guest-friend” relationship roles that encourage mutual acceptance.

Classic research studies, furthermore, demonstrate that the degree and extent of acculturation within a culture depends on and ultimately occurs at the behest of the culture that is doing the borrowing (the receptor culture), rather than the culture from which the other is borrowing (the donor culture). An individual culture’s emphasis upon and mechanisms for maintaining its cultural boundaries, the relative degree of flexibility of its varied internal structures, and the degree and functioning of its mechanisms for self-correction are all major cultural traits that directly and indirectly affect acculturation. The existing values and patterns of the receiving culture serve as a filter that controls the process of acculturation and allows the enthusiastic and wholehearted acceptance of some traits while providing for the firm rejection of others. Thus, acculturation does not proceed at an even rate in terms of all elements of culture within the same group. Research also has indicated that technology tends to be altered more readily than nontangible elements such as beliefs or values.

Perhaps the single most important fact to emerge from the classic studies of acculturation is that acculturation is not only inevitable and extremely dynamic but also highly creative. Researchers made much of the melancholy process of change as cultures adapted to new situations, and they based their observations upon the unspoken romantic assumption that the precontact cultures represented a “golden age” and that acculturation in response to contact was somehow unavoidably corrupting and evil. In marked contrast with this tacit assumption, the description of the borrowing of the Navajo tribe—and other cultures—as incorporative acculturation presented a very different model, explaining that cultures borrowing traits often reinterpret them in form and/or meaning so that a culture may be always changing and yet always retain its integrity. The Navajo, for example, borrowed sheep, horses, silversmithing, weaving, and ceremony and mythology from other cultures, but they reinterpreted all that they borrowed so the new traits became and remain their own.

Research on acculturation published in the 1980s and 1990s supports earlier research and agrees with previous discoveries—though in different language—that acculturation must be recorded and studied as a multivariate and multidimensional process. This research develops and employs highly sophisticated statistical models and tools that enable quantitative analysis as a supplement to the earlier classic qualitative studies. The researchers who are developing this

approach to understanding acculturation emphasize the psychological consequences of acculturation upon individuals.

Keith Cunningham

See Also Anthropological Approach.

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Activism

Any intentional action to bring about social change, to right social injustices, improve environmental, economic, physical, cultural, or material well-being, to name but a few causes. Can take many forms, from persuading individuals to change behavior, to changing structures through grassroots efforts as well as official “political” channels.

Individuals disagree on how to characterize activism—from repeated public displays and dramatic actions built on regular daily acts, to the routines of persistent and resilient organizing, to acts of personal change (including internal, transformational activism) that may help in preparing people to address issues of injustice. Definitions of *activist* are similarly hotly contested. What many do agree upon is the range of strategies useful for bringing about change: socially responsible daily behavior; direct service; community and economic development; voting and formal political activities; direct action strategies (such as rallies, protest, artistic forms of dissent and resistance); grassroots political activity and public policy work; community organizing and community building; and advocacy through community educations. Indeed, many folklorists’ work resonates with, combines, or extends some of these strategies as part of their folkloristic strategies for community involvement. Folklorists also work closely with the

“hidden transcripts” used by marginalized and disenfranchised groups to counter domination with the arts of resistance.

For some, however, issues arise over the optimal approaches of social action, or the best tools for systemic change, with underlying debates revolving around distinctions over the degree of one’s (or a group’s) commitment, the roots of one’s motivations, the consequences of specific strategies employed, concerns over whom one has allied with, and who gets to tell which story of transformation—where, when, how, and to which audiences.

In folklore and folklife, as in most fields, there are various kinds of “activist” traditions that coexist and conflict among the practitioners in the field. (As some of these histories have been detailed under other entries in this encyclopedia, such as applied folklore, public folklore, and occupational folklore, they are not repeated here.) A brief sketch of some folklorists’ casting of activism in the field includes the following.

Barry Ancelet has addressed the “New Deal style activist agenda of the Smithsonian Institution’s Festival of American Folklife and Library of Congress song collecting endeavors.” Names familiar to many come up in such accounts: Moses Ash (founder of Folkways Records), Guy and Candy Caraway, Bernice Johnson Reagon, Alan Lomax, Charles and Tony Seeger, Kenny Goldstein’s early work with labor songs, and so on.

Steve Zeitlin, of City Lore, has characterized folklorists as being politically liberal “cultural activists”; not surprisingly, following this description, a fair number of folklorists’ work can be described as a kind of activism. Key among the figures extolled is the late Archie Green, renowned for laborlore and lobbying. Indeed, Green has been described as the kind of folklife activist who “jumped right in, taking a stance alongside the people with whom he worked.”



In 1939, Woody Guthrie toured the Imperial Valley with John Steinbeck, whose *Grapes of Wrath* sold 420,000 copies in its first year of publication. Guthrie sang at Communist party rallies and union-organizing meetings but was unimpressed by doctrine and never joined the party. (Library of Congress)

Such accounts notwithstanding, in William Westerman's view of the history of the discipline of folklore and folklife, progressive activists have been "marginal if not suspect"; he has found it "astonishing to go back to José Limón's seminal analysis of Western Marxism and folklore (1983) and find no mention of the work of such Marxian-influenced figures as the Lomaxes, the Seegers, the Hortons, the Carawans, Ben Botkin, Woody Guthrie, or Paul Robeson." Westerman has, through his presentations at the American Folklore Society national conferences over the past twenty years (and particularly through its Politics and Social Justice Section) emphasized the need for the field not only to recognize but to bear witness to folklore activists whose life-work has revolved around social change initiatives. In this vein, the William Still Citation for lifelong, grassroots cultural work has been given to such recent honorees as Stetson Kennedy (<http://www.afsnet.org/sections/politics>).

If simply listing "activists" is not sufficient as a means to understand activism in folklore, then what lenses do offer helpful analyses? Perhaps the most recent and provocative work to address the critical edge in the discipline can be found in Debora Kodish's "Folklore: Activism" (forthcoming *JAF*), which emphasizes the ways in which the radical tradition of activist folklore has a legacy with a different agenda than simply being progressive. Though at some points the long history of public folklore and applied folklore may be seen to dovetail with activist agendas, Kodish lays out distinctions that call us to give particular attention to folklore activists who are really going beyond just academics, beyond the university, in the work they do. In this view, folklore activists are not simply those who do political analyses, or lobby officially sanctioned channels, or work through political parties, but all those who widen the circle of participatory action and building of social movements, collectively building capacity through belief in people's own abilities to improve their lives and communities—and to do so through solidarity.

Significantly, this type of approach to activism and social change rings true with criticism in higher education calling for more socially responsible protocols for community development, organizing, and impact assessment. Critics target those institutions that have used "community outreach" and "campus-community partnerships" primarily as tools for public relations or marketing (Stoecker, 1997). That is, while community-service learning or civic engagement movements have been buzzwords in academe for the past fifteen years, such approaches have come under scrutiny for their failure to do justice to the very communities with whom they allege to be in partnership.

For folklorists concerned about how to take action against social injustices and address systemic problems, we do well to keep in mind our principles of engaged ethnography: valuing the views of the people in the midst of the struggle and listening deeply to what they are saying. To the extent that our thoughtful questions begin from positions of solidarity, and to the degree that we work toward equity

in our cultural representations and help to widen the scope of what counts as evidence, then we may be doing activism in folklore. When we work alongside people—if requested—to assist them to improve the physical, material, economic, cultural, and structural dimensions that perpetuate oppressive conditions, we may be folklore activists.

Nancy L. Watterson

See Also Applied Folklore/Folkloristics; Community-Based Research; Occupational Folklife/Folklore; Protest; Public Sector Folklore.

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Aesthetics

The study of the creation and appreciation of beauty. Philosophical approaches to the subject of aesthetics center on the *perception* of beauty in the experience of art. Folkloristic approaches to the subject define those formal features within folklore that constitute its artfulness in communal and/or personal terms. Folklorists speak of aesthetic issues most often in terms of style, artistry, and the relation of tradition and innovation. An aesthetic analysis may pertain to a single genre or to the folklore of an entire community. In either case, aesthetic standards may be examined from a contrastive perspective (i.e., in relation to some other genre or community) or from an in-group perspective. Folkloristic research in aesthetics contributes vitally to theoretical understandings of cultural relativism and the importance of communal tastes in the creation of art. The topic of aesthetics also holds importance for public sector researchers, as it raises issues related to the evaluation and presentation of folklore.

Tradition and Innovation

The study of material culture in particular has furnished significant insights into aesthetics. One of the early classics in the area is Franz Boas's *Primitive Art* (1927). Through examination of traditional arts from around the world, Boas identifies several fundamental criteria of artistry: symmetry (a balance of component elements), rhythm (the regular, pattern-forming repetition of features), and the emphasis or delimitation of form (the tendency toward representative or abstract depiction). The complex interplay of these features makes artwork from one culture distinguishable from that of another.

Since these features underlie all art, however, Boas stresses further the importance of communal tastes in the execution of “primitive” art. Boas writes of a communal “emotional attachment to customary forms,” limiting acceptance of innovation. The fact that the form and details of a given implement may vary little from one artist to the next does not derive from a lack of creativity on the part of the folk artist; rather, the artist responds to the community's greater interest in preserving the traditional. Under these circumstances, the aesthetic merit of a given product resides not in its uniqueness but in the artist's ability to realize and execute communal norms, confining individual variation to small details of ornamentation or style.

As Boas and later scholars demonstrate, this stress on the customary is further bolstered by the communal creation of objects. In a traditional barn raising or quilting bee, for instance, individual tastes or experimentation are limited by the communal execution of the work. Communal production, characteristic of many varieties of traditional material culture, thus exerts a leveling influence on artistic variation and helps ensure the maintenance of a communal aesthetic over time. When traditional performers become separated from this ambient collective tradition of evaluation and production, their work may change greatly, incorporating new ideas and departing to some degree from old standards. Richard Bauman addresses changes of this sort in his study of a folk raconteur turned professional. Similarly, Michael Owen Jones examines the conscious interplay of tradition and innovation in the products of a professional Kentucky mountain chair maker. Jones stresses that aesthetic choices do not occur mechanistically but as the result of personal decisions and values over time.

Given this analytical framework, a prime issue for the folk art collector lies in the question of whether to value typicality in a piece of folklore (an act presumably valued in the traditional community) or to privilege instead those works that transgress typical norms or tastes (an act valued in elite art circles). Judgments of this sort have direct bearing on folk artists, as the monetary value attached to a given work may influence artistic trends within the community itself. Collector interest in a particular physical form or color scheme, for instance, may alter a community's evaluation of that form and lead to its triumph over other types. An obscure performer or style may thus become central, while a community's own evaluative standards lose cogency. By contrast, changes that appear significant to an outside audience may be regarded as minor creative alterations within the ambient community itself, of little consequence to the tradition or its maintenance. Alterations in technique, materials, or use only become significant if they transgress important rules within the community's aesthetic system. Questions of aesthetics thus present intriguing issues for both public sector and academic folklorists alike.

Aesthetics in Communication

Aesthetics becomes an explicit concern of linguistic folklorists through the writings of Roman Jakobson. Jakobson's attention to poetics provides a new basis for the analysis of the aesthetic form and uses of language. In Jakobson's analysis, poetic language draws ordinary words into new frameworks of meaning through attention to criteria (e.g., rhyme) normally ignored in speech. This new axis of *equivalence* distinguishes the poetic utterance from the ordinary. Studies such as William Pepicello and Thomas Green's examination of riddling demonstrate the ways in which folklore can capitalize artfully on such normally unnoticed similarities between words or utterances. The study of ethnopoetics further examines the ways in which equivalence operates in the narrative traditions of

many cultures, converting seemingly utilitarian components of speech (e.g., grammatical case, conjunctions, tense) into markers of artistic structure. In this way, minute aesthetic features become markers of larger aesthetic patternings, themselves constitutive of the narrative's symbolic import.

From the outset, the performance perspective of folklore studies stressed the importance of aesthetic inquiry. Dan Ben-Amos's classic definition of folklore as "*artistic communication in small groups*" (emphasis added) has led others to pay particular attention to the ways in which aesthetic merit is achieved in a given performance. For Richard Bauman, the performance itself becomes framed through communally recognized aesthetic features that distinguish it from ordinary discourse: for example, special language, altered use of voice or body, or special opening and closing formulas. Aesthetic features become instrumental, helping the performer designate the performance as a special moment during which the rules of ordinary communication are temporarily suspended.

Contrastive Analysis

Folklorists have often addressed aesthetic features within a given genre or community from a contrastive perspective. The aesthetic values of a certain kind of folklore, for instance, may be contrasted with the values of elite art or with those of some other community. Typical of a genre-based approach is Max Lüthi's study of European *Märchen* (see Folktale entry). Concentrating on the formal aspects of the genre (e.g., characters, setting, plot), Lüthi demonstrates the *Märchen*'s distinctiveness from elite narrative literature. Similarly, Breandán Breathnach's study of Irish folk music contrasts the means of ornamentation and style in folk music with that of European art music. The features favored by the elite tradition (e.g., variation in intensity of sound—"dynamics") remain unexploited by the folk performer, and other features (e.g., grace notes, rhythm) become prime means of varying and evaluating performances.

John Michael Vlach offers a community-based approach to contrastive aesthetics in his examination of African American arts. In his discussion of quilting, for instance, Vlach not only stresses the survival of West African techniques and styles but also examines how the particular aesthetic embodied in such works contrasts with the Euroamerican aesthetic of quilt form. Whereas Anglo quilt makers of the nineteenth century valued geometric regularity and naturalistic representational depiction, African American quilters valued works that employed both "improvisational" patternings and stylized figures.

Such contrastive analysis is particularly enlightening when the groups or genres compared have existed side by side for an extended period, leading to the more or less conscious creation and maintenance of contrastive evaluative standards. Differential aesthetics can become a means of creating and defending cultural boundaries, of resisting a threatened loss of communal identity.

In-Group Values: Ethnoaesthetics

Often, however, the folklorist seeks to explicate a communal aesthetic on its own terms, without reference to some contrasting system. An examination of this type turns to native concepts and categories. Gary Gossen's study of Chamula verbal categories, for instance, discusses the importance of "heat" in Chamula evaluations of oral performance. Genres differ from one another in Chamula culture through differences in attendant heat, and one performance differs from another in its ability to create the proper degree of heatedness. Heat becomes the conceptual basis of Chamula verbal aesthetics, relating it in turn to aspects of Chamula mythology.

Gary Witherspoon and Barre Toelken point to the similar centrality of the concepts of process and cosmic interrelation in the aesthetics of Navajo people. Navajo aesthetics locates beauty in the act of creation rather than in the product and stresses of the relation of that act to many others occurring in tandem throughout the universe. Beauty is a central and profoundly meaningful concept rather than a marginal or superfluous one. Aesthetics can thus provide insight into deep philosophical questions of native metaphysics and worldview.

Although folkloristic approaches to aesthetics may appear diffuse and unsystematized, they indicate the fundamental importance of aesthetics for the study of folklore. Aesthetics helps link the performer and the community, the personal and the communal. It provides a crucial focus for researchers interested in the artistry of human communication.

Thomas A. DuBois

See Also Art, Folk; Ethnoaesthetics; Linguistic Approach; Material Culture; Oral Tradition; Performance; Tradition.

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African American Folklore

Roots of African American Folklore

Many strands of oral and material traditions from Africa have blended with European and other cultures to form the basis from which most recognizable African American folklore genres have emerged: spirituals, trickster tales, toasts, the dozens, proverbs, legends, the blues, and rap. These genres, all noted for their verbal artistry, serve as vehicles through which views toward the sacred and the secular and ideas about the community versus the individual, cleverness



Artist's rendition of Brer Rabbit in Joel Chandler Harris's *Uncle Remus* stories, 1899. Brer Rabbit says, "You feels de fleas a bitin', Brer Wolf," as he pours scalding water on the wolf. (Library of Congress)

overcoming the powerful, greed, sex, violence, alcohol and drug abuse, male-female relationships, dominance and subordination, identity and race, and other such themes are transmitted from generation to generation. Along with material folk culture, they represent some of the most important cultural resources that comprise the African American experience.

Because of the importance of the spoken word among African groups from which slaves were captured, many of the most ubiquitous folklore forms are cast in Black English dialect. A subject that has received considerable interest among sociolinguists and folklorists, Black English dialect varies from Standard English in at least three ways: grammar (for example, dropping the /s/ in nouns to indicate plurality and lack of verb tense, such as “He got five dollar”), pronunciation (for instance, substituting *d* for *th* in “the”), and vocabulary (such as *gumbo*, *jazz*, and *okra*).

Zora Neale Hurston offers an excellent example of dialect in *Mules and Men* (1935), in which she records a number of folk narratives she collected in Florida during the 1930s. Her collection of stories and jokes contrasts with Joel Chandler Harris’s earlier publication *Nights with Uncle Remus* (1883), a collection of tales that Harris (who was white) heard from blacks while growing up in the South. Uncle Remus, a fictional black servant who tells the plantation owner’s son the stories Harris edited, employs phonetic dialect (often called eye dialect) as a literary device to underscore the quaintness of black southern characters. That and later publications by Harris offered to white readers the richness of folk wisdom but also sparked a scholarly debate about the origins of these so-called dialect tales. Conversely, Hurston’s collection was based on ethnographic research she conducted among fellow blacks in and around her hometown of Eatonville, Florida, and comes closer to capturing the spoken word in print.

Did the tales from these and other collections originate from Europe or from Africa? Folklorist Richard Dorson, who employed research tools that indexed folk narrative motifs and folktale types, favored a predominantly European origin. After reviewing the work of black and white collectors of African American folklore who preceded him, Dorson concluded that his collection of tales was non-African in origin. For example, he claimed that “Coon in the Box,” among the best-known Old Marster stories, derives from a *motif* (K1956, “Sham wise man”), which appears in “Doctor-Know-All” (AT 1641), collected and published by the Grimm brothers.

“The Coon in the Box” is a story of black servant Jack who endangers himself when his boss wagers that Jack is a “know-it-all” who can guess the contents of a box. What the boss does not realize is that Jack always investigates the facts ahead of time so that he appears to have an uncanny ability to know things in advance. But this time, Jack did not know the contents of the box, in which the boss had placed a raccoon. Jack gives up and proclaims, “You got that old coon at last,” thereby correctly “guessing” the contents and guaranteeing his boss considerable

financial gain. William Bascom effectively countered Dorson's claims of European origins by drawing from a considerable number of collections in both the Eastern and Western Hemispheres, and his comparative analysis makes the strong connection between African and African American folktales unquestionable.

Later scholars furthered the debate by revisiting "The Coon in the Box" in Dorson's earlier collection. According to John Minton and David Evans (2001), "The Coon in the Box" as a version of "Doctor Know-All" represents an African American adaptation of a universal trickster tale. What is important is the culturally specific understandings of the tale and its concern with the connections African Americans probably drew between the tale and their circumstances in which they were unable to escape from a system that linked race and class. Jack (aka John) helps his boss (Marster) win the bet, but the protagonist merely escapes with his life. Rarely is he the beneficiary of any material gain. In short, "The Coon in the Box" demonstrates that as blacks assimilated European culture, they nevertheless expressed African modes of thought, recasting these as distinctly African American traditions. The reinterpretation of European expressive forms that have also drawn from African sources and in many cases have distinctly African roots, which Bascom argued, renders the argument of origins of African American tales meaningless if scholars ignore the context in which such forms emerge.

Lawrence Levine's *Black Culture and Black Consciousness* (1977) offers a fine example of how blacks in the Americas incorporate folklore into their everyday lives. Employing ex-slave narratives and other primary sources, Levine gives a compelling argument that there is no doubt that since European colonization of the Americas, Africans figured prominently in shaping its history and culture, transporting their traditions and customs with them as they were forced from their homelands and onto plantations. Yet some early scholars claimed black slaves suffered from cultural amnesia, given the traumatic experience of the trans-Atlantic crossing. Other theories that Melville Herskovits in his *Myth of the Negro Past* (1941) challenged included the notion that because blacks were thought biologically inferior to white Europeans, they were incapable of possessing any kind of artistic or creative abilities of their own and certainly had no way of forming a unifying body of folklore, particularly given the diverse linguistic stocks from which they came. However, changes in ways of speaking eventually evolved from the pidgin languages to a creolized form that simplified verb tense and other linguistic forms. Children learned this creole, which moved toward the dominant language form that became known as Black English dialect. Moreover, there are a number of similarities among the trickster and animal tales in Africa that resulted in a distinctly African American corpus of folklore, much of which Hurston's *Mules and Men* captures in print. That African slaves were childlike savages, a *tabula rasa* upon which Europeans could force their own values and worldviews, was a racist idea roundly debunked by Herskovits.

Slavery and Spirituals

Entering North America along the eastern seaboard and the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, slaves who survived the trans-Atlantic crossing affected plantation culture in all aspects of life. Out of the slave experience grew a rich body of expressive culture reflecting a distinct set of values and attitudes. The oral traditions that emerged were vehicles by which they expressed their joys and sorrows and their beliefs, giving them a means of coping with this oppressive system.

To encourage black slaves to work under harsh conditions while draining, clearing, and cultivating huge areas along river systems, white overseers and plantation owners felt it would be beneficial for their investment in human property to teach them about God and the dire consequences that would be visited upon those who rejected God's commandments not to steal or lie and to work hard for the white man. However, slaves found aspects of the Old Testament particularly relevant to their own captivity. It was easy to identify with the story of Moses, who freed the Hebrews from the Egyptian pharaoh. Belief in a better world gave slaves hope that the day would come when they would also be free. Such images of escape, even if it meant in the afterlife, helped them cope with their secular world of hard work. However, indentured servants also brought with them their own distinct religious system replete with a variety of deities and means of protection from the forces of evil. The religion of vodou is a magico-religious system whose leaders (priests) played important roles in inspiring rebellious slaves to resist brutal plantation life. A central figure was Legba, a god of West Africa and vodou, a cunning, intelligent trickster who holds the key to the gate that separates the human's world from the world of the gods. European Christian beliefs did not destroy many of the beliefs that slaves brought with them to the Americas.

Spirituals invoking images from the Bible did not all necessarily imply an acceptance of the slave's lot on earth. Some early spirituals had subversive messages:

I don't want to ride in no golden chariot,
I don't want to wear no golden crown,
I want to stay down here and be
Just as I am without one plea.

Spirituals were also masked messages about freedom and escape in this world: for example, "Go down Moses, way down in Egypt land / Tell Ole Pharaoh to let my people go" and "Swing low, sweet chariot, comin' for to carry me home." "Follow the Drink' Gourd" may have been a celestial map, a guide to the underground railroad for blacks seeking to escape slavery. Nevertheless, as most folklorists have observed, spirituals—which W. E. B. DuBois dubbed "sorrow songs"—also express the hardships slaves endured and the hope for freedom that

would come to God's chosen people, espousing their confidence of getting into heaven while assuring them that sinful whites would not. In short, spirituals could appeal either to the secular world of enslaved people or to the sacred one that offered hope for freedom.

This chapter in the emergence of a distinctly African American expressive form is a recurring one as American blacks find cause to remember their cultural legacy in the form of folk festivals, or what have been called freedom celebrations. Freedom celebrations remind celebrants of their legacy, the saga of which passes from one generation to another through colorful pageants. William H. Wiggins Jr. (1987) describes the saga as having four epochs. The first deals with the African past with scenes that depict the glories of Egypt, Ethiopia, and other ancient civilizations. The second period is slavery, which includes episodes such as forms of physical and psychological torture, slave revolts, the Underground Railroad, and the emergence of slave spirituals.

Emancipation follows slavery, with scenes of Lincoln issuing the Emancipation Proclamation, the Civil War, the role of black soldiers, slaves who felt morally obligated to run the plantation while their masters were away at war, and their subsequent experiences of freedom. The final epoch describes the continual struggle for freedom that began with Emancipation, underscoring that forms of slavery still exist, and this part of the saga also includes the disfranchisement of blacks during Reconstruction, mass migrations from the South to the North, participation of black soldiers in American wars, the civil rights movement, the rise of black nationalism, race riots, and the emergence of blues, jazz, gospel, and other musical contributions blacks have made to American culture and history. These annual events give celebrants opportunities to pass along to younger generations their histories, songs, and stories, thereby reminding them of their roots and their continuing struggle for first-class citizenship in the New World.

The plantation culture that depended upon slavery represented the second epoch in these freedom celebrations. Such a context gave rise to spirituals as a worldview emerged that linked the slave's world with that of the Hebrews under Moses and also included aspects of a belief system with African antecedents. In this worldview, certain gifted individuals such as conjure doctors could manipulate supernatural forces to achieve their own ends. Practitioners of these beliefs were sometimes at odds with Christian converts, though in some respects the two systems influenced each other. Moses, like the fictional John de Conqueror popular in plantation oral traditions, was a mystical figure possessing the power to help others. However, conjurers were also capable of countering a bad spell, or *juju*, and believers seeking to control supernatural forces as well as faith healers combined both natural remedies for the sick and injured with magic. For those who worked close to the soil, knowledge of plants with medicinal properties played an important role in combating the numerous maladies slaves regularly

faced. Many overseers and slaveowners relied on the skills of black healers and midwives familiar with such herbs and plants. These folk healers were indispensable on plantations, particularly those lacking access to trained physicians. However, if natural cures or everyday methods for solving problems were ineffective or unavailable, then a patient might find it necessary to consult a specialist who could manipulate unseen forces to thwart an enemy, avenge a wrong toward oneself or loved one, or create a love potion. The belief system therefore incorporated both religion and magic, though practitioners of vodou, derived from the Caribbean Vodun religion, were often held in awe and often feared by both blacks and whites. Stories abound on plantations of hoodoo doctors capable of transforming themselves to evade capture, while folk healers such as midwives were depended upon by whites on plantations where white doctors were not always available. The efficacy of such healers was sometimes even preferred at times. When white physicians were unsuccessful in delivering the mistress's baby, she often sent for a black plantation midwife. According to one account, two white doctors attempted to discredit a particular midwife's claims in a successful delivery and ridiculed her, warning, "Get back darkie, we mean business an' don' won't any witch doctors or hoodoo stuff." Nevertheless, the white woman insisted she stay and perform her work. Such healers were more inclined to place their faith in their knowledge of plants and herbs than in controlling supernatural forces characteristic of hoodoo doctors.

However, many who believed that supernatural forces could be controlled through magic and ritual received reinforcement in those beliefs whenever misfortune befell their white captors, such as when the dreaded boll weevil destroyed cotton crops or when floods threatened to ruin a white landowner's investment. These were acts of an angry God who sought revenge against evil whites who mistreated slaves. These conditions also fostered the development of a rich body of trickster tales, stories that often depicted the subservient black slave outwitting his master, such as the cycle of Marster-John tales that was pervasive throughout plantation communities in the southern United States.

Typically in these tales, John would invert the power relations between him and his white master. In a version of "Old Marster Eats Crow" recorded by Richard Dorson, John was caught hunting on Master's place and was warned not to do so anymore, but John did anyway and shot a crow. Marster told John to give him his gun, and he then aimed it at him and demanded John to pick the feathers off the crow, saying, "Now start at his head, John, and eat the crow up to where you stopped picking the feathers at." After John finished eating, Marster returned his gun, but when John started walking away, he turned toward Marster, pointed the gun at him, and said, "Lookie here, Old Marster," and threw the rest of the crow at him. "I want you to start at his ass and eat all the way, and don't let a feather fly from your mouth."

Stories also circulated that would teach young listeners about what happens to careless slaves who fail to adhere to an informal code of conduct such as not telling others everything you know or cooperating with white authority figures. “Talking Turtle” is about a turtle who scolded John: “Black man, you talk too much,” whereupon John ran to get Old Marster to come with him to the bayou to see the talking turtle. But Old Marster did not want to go see a talking turtle because he did not believe John. He warned him he would give John a good beating if he was lying. When they arrived at the bayou, the turtle said nothing as his head receded into his shell, so John received a beating. A bewildered John returned to the bayou, and the turtle said, “Black man, didn’t I tell you you talked too much?”

Trickster Tales

The trickster figure played a prominent role in folktales heard on Southern slave plantations, but the animal tricksters bore the closest resemblance to their African counterparts. Tricksters such as Hare or Rabbit (found throughout East Africa) and Spider (a transformation of Anansi common in much of West Africa and the Caribbean) were relatively small and weak creatures and therefore reached their goals through wit and guile rather than through physical power. What they craved—food, sex, and other prizes—were much the same as the desires of the slaves who told of their exploits. Storytellers and listeners identified with them, and such animal tales explained how the alligator got his mouth, why the rabbit has a short tail, and how a protagonist outwits his stronger foe (for example, “Tar Baby”). Most important, the victories of Brer Rabbit became the victories of the slaves. Narrators also told supernatural and religious tales as well as other kinds of explanatory tales: how the church evolved, why the black man’s hair is nappy, and why African Americans are black. But after slavery, these tales gave way to a different kind of protagonist, one who figured in a type of narrative that came to be known as toasts and who was also often incorporated into other expressive forms.

In the animal tale “Tar Baby,” which Harris popularized in his early Uncle Remus collection, the trickster Rabbit “signifies” on his antagonist Fox, imploring him not to throw him into the briar patch, which is, of course, the rabbit’s natural habitat, and thus ridiculing his adversary’s ignorance. The rabbit’s signifying is one of the most striking features in black oral tradition and most often implies indirect insult. The toast “The Signifying Monkey” tells how Monkey tells Lion that Elephant has been saying bad things about him and that it is Elephant who is king of the jungle. This causes Lion to seek Elephant in a duel, much to the delight of Monkey, whose satisfaction comes from his ability to create chaos through his verbal skills. When Lion discovers Monkey’s deception, he returns to the tree where Monkey is laughing hysterically. Monkey further incurs

the wrath of Lion, again signifying on him by hurling insults at Lion and ridiculing his gullibility while sitting safely high on a tree limb. But while jumping up and down in laughter, the monkey slips and falls and finds himself at the mercy of Lion. He again quickly fools Lion into forgiving him, scurries back up the tree, and continues ranting and berating the Lion's gullibility. This toast illustrates some of the most important features of signifying, and the situational context in which the word applies narrows its meaning.

Toasts

Toasts, sometimes known as jokes, are long narratives often in rhymed couplets that frequently employ signifying as one of their most significant features. They are often heard in prisons, on street corners, and at barbershops, restaurants, meeting halls, or wherever men gather to tell stories. Besides the well-known "Signifying Monkey," there are other toasts that include a trickster-badman figure. Unlike trickster John in the John-Marster tale cycle specific to Southern slave plantations, the protagonist in black toasts takes on much different characteristics. For instance, the character Shine appears in one of the best-known toasts in black oral tradition, "The Titanic."

After the superliner *Titanic* sank in 1912, the toast appeared in a variety of versions in both song and prose narrative among blacks and whites, but the toast most popular in black oral tradition depicted the character Shine, a lowly boiler room worker, rebelling against the ultimate white authority figure aboard ship, the captain. Perhaps because the *Titanic* refused passage to African Americans (except those who worked in subservient positions like Shine), including black heavyweight boxing champion Jack Johnson, the toast must have had a particular appeal among those it circulated. Essentially, Shine, a trickster-type character who possesses badman qualities, responds to the captain's demands for him to return below and continue shoveling coal, despite Shine's warning that the ship is sinking, by ultimately refusing the order. The following excerpt comes from a collection of toasts that Bruce Jackson recorded from a black convict at a south-east Texas prison farm:

Up popped Shine from the deck below,
says, "Captain, captain," says, "you don't know."
Says, "There's about forty feet of water on the boiler-room floor."
He said, "Never mind, Shine, you go on back and keep stackin' them
sacks,
I got forty-eight pumps to keep the water back."
Shine said, "Well, that seems damned funny, it may be damned fine,
but I'm gonna try to save this black ass of mine."
So Shine jumped overboard and begin to swim,

and all the people were standin' on deck watchin' him.
 Captain's daughter jumped on the deck with her dress above her head and
 her
 teddies below her knees.
 and said, "Shine, Shine," say, "won't you save poor me?"
 Say, "I'll make you rich as any Shine can be."
 Shine said, "Miss, I know you is pretty and that is true,
 but there's women on the shore can make a ass out a you."
 Captain said, "Shine, Shine, you save poor me,
 I make you as rich as any Shine can be."
 Shine say, "There's fish in the ocean, whales in the sea,
 captain, get your ass in the water and swim like me."

The toast underscores institutionalized racism and plays on stereotyped images of sexually promiscuous blacks who prey on white women. The laughter that comes from listening to a gifted raconteur depict white people drowning as the outrageous Shine swims to safety gives this particular toast special prominence in black oral tradition. The style of delivery also affects audience response, and a good speaker includes such paralinguistic devices of communication as facial and hand gestures and voice inflections. Other toasts have transformed the heroic qualities of the trickster slave into a character who not only boasts of his physical abilities but associates himself with some of the most dangerous elements in society: prostitutes, pimps, and gamblers. One of the best badman toasts that illustrates this type of character is Stagolee, who kills Billy Lyons over a Stetson hat in a bar called the Bucket of Blood (a generic term for juke joints).

The Dozens

The dozens, a form of verbal dueling, is often associated with toasts. The dozens is embedded in the "The Signifying Monkey" as Monkey exchanges insults with Lion, but the dozens primarily involves black adolescents who engage in ritual insults until somebody "loses."

"Playing the dozens" also goes by names that vary regionally, such as "signifying" or "sigging" (Chicago), "joning" (Washington, DC), "woofing" (Philadelphia), and "capping" (West Coast). Played by and performed among an audience that most often involves black adolescent males, the object is to hurl creative insults or "snaps" against one's opponents (often targeting a close relative such as one's mother), whereupon the recipient of the snap responds accordingly. "Sound-ing" also refers to the ritualized insult, and for somebody to "sound on" somebody else refers to a ritualized attribute of that person: for example, "If ugliness were bricks, your mother would be a housing project." A clever response would build on this insult, receiving either praise or groans from listeners. It is a verbal activity

that can take on a wide range of meanings. According to the civil rights leader H. Rap Brown, “The real aim of the Dozens was to get a dude so mad he’d cry or get mad enough to fight.” Moreover, Brown pointed out, “Some of the best Dozens players were girls.” Therefore, the game is not necessarily gender-specific, although the content of the insults differ according to a performer’s gender.

Major themes of the dozens include poverty (“Your family is so poor, they go to Kentucky Fried Chicken to lick other people’s fingers”), ugliness (“Your mother is so ugly, when she walks in the bank they turn off the cameras”), stupidity (“Your sister is so stupid, she went to the baker for a yeast infection”), and sexual promiscuity (“Your mother’s like a bag of chips, she’s free-to-lay”).

Other interpretations of the dozens include the notion that this form of activity is a reflection of tensions black males face in an environment where one must prove masculinity and reject femininity. Roger D. Abrahams (1970) suggests that the dozens enables a boy to attack some other person’s mother and consequently diminish his own mother’s influence. Another explanation, proposed by Onwuchekwa Jemie (2003), holds that the disrespect shown the mother in the dozens is the means by which a boy eventually disengages himself from the comfort of his mother’s intimacy—an issue more important for African American males than their African counterparts, given the abuse black males have suffered in the New World and their frequent difficulties in protecting family members. Playing the dozens includes considerable signifying, as is evident in “The Signifying Monkey.”

Proverbs and Rumor Stories

Verbal artistry may also be seen in African American proverbs, a form that can be most easily understood within the context in which it is heard. Sw. Anand Prahlad cites an example, “Different strokes for different folks,” that has been used in a variety of circumstances, and “You reap what you sow,” a proverb often found in slave narratives. These succinct forms contrast with the longer narrative forms that have more recently appeared in collections such as the various urban legends recorded and analyzed by Patricia Turner (1994).

Turner’s best-known work is her analysis of the rumors that suggested FBI culpability in its lack of enthusiasm in investigating the Atlanta child murders that were committed from 1979 until 1981. Other conspiracy rumors appeared after the arrest of a suspect whom many thought was innocent and suggested a plot by the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) to destroy young blacks. Additional stories have circulated about the KKK’s efforts in this and other plots, such as its purported involvement in contaminating chicken in a fast-food chain to make young black men sterile.

Field Hollers and Work Songs

While spirituals influenced the development of gospel music, which focused more on themes from the New Testament than from its predecessor, contemporary African American folk music forms such as blues and later rap and hip-hop also draw heavily upon a rich body of earlier traditions.

Oral traditions associated with plantation culture include field hollers and work songs. These forms are rooted in black American culture going back at least three centuries. They sometimes contain words, but as often as not wordless sounds, to call others from the field or communicate with neighboring field-workers. Work songs, by definition, accompanied labor on plantations and could still be heard in southern prisons well into the twentieth century. They not only helped pass the time but often helped to prevent slow workers from attracting the attention of a brutal overseer or prison guard. While they helped to regulate and coordinate work of all kinds (including hoeing, chopping cotton, cutting down trees, and aligning railroad ties), they also were an acceptable means by which singers expressed their discontent with harsh and unfair working conditions, their longing to be home, or concern over who might be home sleeping with a worker's girlfriend or wife. Military analogues to these work songs include marching chants such as "Jody songs" popular among black soldiers, who disseminated them throughout the ranks while they were away from home. Jody was the character thought to be sleeping with one's wife.

Field hollers and work songs dealt with themes that also appeared in the blues such as a rule-breaking aggressive protagonist who challenges white authority and the status quo (for example, "John Hardy" and "Railroad Bill"). Such ideas in song suggest a certain amount of thematic continuity in black oral tradition that manifested itself in the blues. The blues often emphasizes an emotional intensity registering concerns common to black listeners. Audience members had opportunities to participate in blues performances, given the nature of the genre's call-and-response pattern, in such contexts as juke joints.

Blues, Rap, and Hip-Hop

Blues most often conforms to or varies somewhat from a basic twelve-bar, AAB pattern. Lyrics frequently contain several stanzas, each one twelve measures of 4/4 time in length. The first line (A) is repeated by the second, and the stanza's third line (B) usually rhymes with the first two. However, each of the three lines may take only a few measures to sing, allowing two measures for an instrumental "response" to the vocal line. The most common blues sequence in these musical phrases is tonic, subdominant, and dominant chords (for example, A major, D major, and E major). However, the scale of most blues is based on so-called blue notes that fall somewhere between the cracks of the piano keys and are thus slightly lower or flatter than they normally would be in a Western musical scale.

Such notes include both major and minor thirds, major and minor sevenths, and perfect and flatted fifths. The music of the blues is very similar to that of its precursors, and the line between sacred and secular music is not always clear.

The religious experience, particularly chanted speech, affected the blues. Indeed, the preaching tradition and the blues tradition involve verbal skills their practitioners acquire by supernatural means. For example, songster Robert Johnson is reputed to have “bought” blues skills by selling his soul at the “crossroads.” Both black preachers and bluesmen employ a pattern of call-and-response. Phrases that are formulaic in preaching are also typical among blues performers. Other parallels are evident during performances, such as audience-congregation participation.

Early hymnody, spirituals, and gospels helped shaped the blues. “Dr. Watts” hymns, named after the late-eighteenth-century composer Isaac Watts, were performed among nonliterate black congregations by “lining-out,” a style wherein a song leader recites a line that congregants repeat in a slow rhythmic tempo. Although spirituals had their settings in the Old Testament, they contained livelier melodies than Dr. Watts hymns, with patterned stanzas, a chorus easily learned and sung and that was infinitely expandable. Spirituals stressed otherworldliness and the rewards of the life to come, themes with potential for a good deal of emotion. Gospel music took shape during the last quarter of the nineteenth century with the advent of the gospel quartet, and it is more upbeat than spirituals with lyrics concerned with this world rather than the afterlife, focusing on more positive images of proper behavior in the here and now. It remains one of the most popular kinds of religious music in black oral tradition. It is not unusual to see blues performers beginning their careers singing hymns, gospels, and spirituals while growing up with a church, and later turning to blues and other types of secular music.

Having emerged at least by the 1890s, the blues draws from traditional motifs, images, and stanzas. A performer was flexible in his composition particularly in non-thematic, country, and folk blues (and more so than in city, urban, popular, and thematic blues). The songs’ themes deal with problems in the everyday secular world, especially male-female relationships. This topic is common because of the uncertainty of relationships, but also because of the festive contexts in which bluesmen often performed such as juke joints, known for gambling, sexual promiscuity, and sometimes even lethal fights over women. Other subjects a bluesman might raise include unemployment, ill health, crime and prison, and other kinds of tragedy that formed part of the everyday experience of black audiences. Lyrics employ culturally specific images and metaphors, such as comparing the object of one’s desire to a horse or to a “handyman.” A distinctive blues vocabulary—such as *rider* referring to “woman” and *diddy-wah-diddy* as an ideal community or place—emerged in the tradition.

Scholars have classified blues in terms of regional styles and the musical instruments frequently accompanying their performances: “country,” “classic,” and

“urban.” Country blues includes the eastern seaboard blues of Peg Leg Howell, Brownie McGhee, and Sonny Terry; Delta blues exhibits “heavy” texture, shouting, and frenetic vocal style typical of songsters Robert Johnson (dubbed “King of the Delta Blues”) and his predecessor Charley Patton; Texas blues commonly has a single-string guitar, relaxed vocal qualities, and “light” texture, as heard in recordings by Blind Lemon Jefferson, Mance Lipscomb, and Lightnin’ Hopkins; and jug bands use jugs, washboards, and kazoos as exemplified in the music of ensembles from Memphis, Tennessee, such as that of Gus Cannon and Will Shade. “Classic” blues, sometimes referred to as city blues, is typically associated with early recording artists Bessie Smith and Ma Rainey and features string bass, electric guitar, drums, and sometimes a piano as accompanying instruments. These singers were popular blues artists whose recordings appeared on “race” records that targeted black customers and that often inspired the careers of other blues performers who heard them. Urban blues includes bands with drums and electric instruments—for example, groups fronted by B. B. King, Jimmy Reed, Muddy Waters, and Howlin’ Wolf.

Growing out of these earlier forms is the rap music of modern hip-hop culture. Unlike its predecessors, rap music relies on the manipulation of technology as it explores poverty, urban blight, and violence. Rap is a form of music employing rhyme, rhythmic speech, chanting, and street speech—all performed over a musical soundtrack. Economic development that has changed areas of cities such as the Bronx in New York generated an outcry among adolescents who have reacted by employing expressive forms that resulted in rap music. The word *rap* is very similar to terms that have been used to refer to the dozens (for example, *jonin*g, *capping*, and *sounding*) and therefore has considerable affinity with earlier black oral traditions.

Arts, Crafts, and Architecture

The most visible evidence of the contributions of African American folklore to the shaping of American culture and history is in material culture. John Michael Vlach (1978) gives a compelling argument connecting the shotgun house to West Africa, a “signpost to African-derived culture,” suggesting that the name shotgun may even stem from the Yoruba *to-gun*, a word that means “place of assembly.” The Yoruba house comes from slaves of Angola-Zaire origin, and Vlach has demonstrated that the most common slave house in Haiti was a rectangular gable-roofed house comprised of wattle-and-daub walls and a high thatch roof, like those among the Yoruba.

Evidence suggests that a prototype of the shotgun house resulted from the interaction of African slaves, French colonials, and Arawak Indians in Haiti. Scattered throughout the lower Mississippi River Delta and the South in general, it derives its name from the ability to view the structure’s back exit from the front door,

enabling one to fire a shotgun through the entire length of the house. A typical shotgun house has three or more small rooms connected directly to one another. Like its West African and Caribbean counterparts, the shotgun house matched perfectly the warm southern climate in which African slaves found themselves, but it also reveals a worldview that values close interactions among its occupants.

There is a distinct tradition of highly ornamental ironwork in African American blacksmithing, though ironworking has also taken on a more utilitarian dimension as well—as seen in the work of African American blacksmiths in East Texas and elsewhere who are continuing a tradition in which the blacksmith is the pivotal craftsman of his community. His importance in the New World is tied to an African legacy in which he was master of the four elements—air, earth, fire, and water—and capable of transforming himself at will into various animals and plants. He is an ambivalent figure in West African folklore, an intermediary between the living and the dead. In Central Africa, blacksmith kings appear in legend as founders of their state, and in the Congo the blacksmith's authority ranks him with chiefs, priests, and sorcerers. Although such mythical powers did not manifest themselves in the Western Hemisphere, the African American blacksmith's social status in Southern rural communities today reveals parallels to the status enjoyed by his African forebears. Intense involvement in their communities allows black ironworkers in East Texas and elsewhere to enjoy a status similar to the role of a blacksmith in the pre-Civil War South. Writers have noted that some blacksmiths were particularly capable of subversive activities such as making weapons for uprisings. Because so much depends upon the work of a skilled ironworker, slaveowners recognized their value. The interrelationship of a blacksmith with his community and an accounting of the role blacksmiths have played in Southern communities is revealed in many of the ex-slave narratives collected by federal workers during the Great Depression.

Another aspect of the plantation experience that continues today is the quilt, also a subject embedded in ex-slave narratives. African American appliqué and strip quilts often juxtapose contrasting colors and designs, a distinct African American characteristic. An appliqué quilt of Harriet Powers of Georgia, for example, included two pictorial quilts, and her 1896 Bible quilt contrasts eleven panels arranged in three horizontal bands, rendering scenes from the Bible in an overall arrangement that appears random despite following a linear sequence. Asymmetrical and unpredictable designs or “offbeat” patterns are esthetic options in West and Central African fabrics, which folklorists have recently recognized in other expressive forms among African Americans in the southern United States. Among West Africans, colors are also extremely important in cloth. African American women in Suriname value strong colors in their pieced textiles so much that colors should “shine” or “burn.” The color of one piece should “lift up” the one next to it—that is, it should provide strong contrast.

The esthetic at work in this kind of material culture manifests itself in similar ways in African American folk art, such as that of Nathaniel Barrow of Helena, Arkansas. Barrow has been painting telephones; carving airplanes, boats, and trucks; crafting whirligigs; and fashioning wall hangings from wood since 1977. The content in his artworks include color schemes and asymmetry similar to what appear in the quilts. Some paintings by Barrow include drawings of snakes, an important motif in African American folklore that also figures into voodoo rituals.

The African American experience cannot be understood unless traditional expressive forms, whose contents and forms have changed over the centuries, are considered. Folk music and song, trickster tales, toasts, the dozens, proverbs, legends, and folk arts and crafts are a small sampling of many more cultural resources that comprise much of the black diaspora and give meaning to a diverse ethnic group that continues to shape American culture and history.

Richard Allen Burns

See Also African Folklore; Anansi; Ethnic Folklore.

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African Folklore

African folklore is part of the oral tradition of black culture. They are oral traditional tales of Africa that have survived and transformed by African American and Caribbean storytelling and cultural practices. When they needed to write about the literature of their ancestors, West African intellectuals of the 1960s turned to the *griot* to preserve the age-old traditions of African storytelling. The *griot*, whose inherited wisdom was acquired through legacy, age, and experience, was the only person who could keep the African past from falling into oblivion at a time when modernization was casting its shadows over the continent. A troubadour par excellence, the *griot* was an erudite poet whose knowledge and wisdom came not only from his function of historian and genealogist, but also from his role of diplomat and diviner. He retained sacred knowledge of the unmatched arts of praise-poetry, story collecting, reciting, and negotiating.

The *griot* was traditionally a public servant, counselor, and artist at the service of the royal authority and the people that it governed. His fate depended on the survival and prosperity of the king or queen next to whom he would walk, ride, and run, even during wartime. This unity between the *griot* and royal personages was manifested in the continuing relationships between the families of the *griots* and royalty. In the empires that used to be in current Mali, Guinea, Senegal, and



Griots entertain during an annual ceremony in Bafut, a village in Cameroon's northwestern province, in 1994. Participants perform rites to thank the ancestors for protecting the village. (Jean Pierre Kepseu/Panapress/Getty Images)

the Gambia, “it was understood that a son would succeed his father as *griot* to a particular line of kings.” When author Djibril Tamsir Niane went to collect information about the epic of Sunjata Keita, Guinean *griot* Djeli Mamadou Kouyate told him, “The hero’s father, Maghan Kon Fatta, the king of Mali, had as his *griot* a certain Gnankouman Doua; when the king died and Sunjata succeeded to the throne, he inherited as *griot* the son of Doua, Balla Fasseke Kouyate” (Niane, 1965, 9). Djeli Mamadou Kouyate rendered the exact words that Maghan Kon Fatta had spoken to his son Sunjata before he died: “In Manden each prince has a *griot*; the father of Doua [that is, Duga] was my father’s *griot*; Doua is my *griot*; the son of Doua, Balla Fasseke, is to be your *griot*” (cited in Austen, 1999, 34). These statements demonstrate the vital role that the *griot* plays as a historian and keeper of oral tradition in Africa. By transmitting unwritten knowledge of the past, the *griot* becomes the purveyor of African oral tradition. Djeli Kuyate’s repetition of the word *griot*, his emphasis on names, and the distinctive tonality, cadence, and rhythm in which he narrates Maghan Kon Fatta’s last words to his son are patterns of the old poetic tradition from which contemporary African oral strategies derived. The manner in which the *griot* recites or interprets traditional epics, such as that of Sunjata, helps us understand the origins and characteristics of African discursive strategies. In this epic, Sumanguru Kante, king of Sosso,

old Mali, had a conversation with his new *griot*, Bala Faasege, whom he had taken from his rival, Sunjata. Sumanguru told Bala:

What is your name?

The griot replied, "My name is Nyankuma Dookha."

Sumanguru said, "I am going to take your name from you;

And apart from those with special knowledge,

No one will know your name any more.

I shall name you after my xylophone.

What I am going to do to you,

That is what I shall make your name.

The third will be your surname

Your first name is Balo;

I will cut your Achilles tendons;

Your surname is Kuyate."

They call him Bala Faasege Kuyate. (cited in Austen, 1999, pp. 36–37)

This epic, which was narrated by Malian *griot* Demba Kanute in the early 1970s, reflects the importance of orality and understated meaning in traditional African poetry. As the tone of the conversation between Sumanguru and Bala Faasege suggests, in traditional African epic poetry, the importance of the word depends on the way meaning is encoded and expressed in a verbal exchange. When Sumanguru tells his new *griot* Bala, "I am going to take your name from you," he intends to go further than just removing the civil name and identity that Bala had in the past. Sumanguru envisions to completely eradicate Bala's previous status as *griot* of the Keita family by transforming him into the bard of the Kante household. This shift of identity requires substituting Bala's previous allegiance to the "Dookha" for a new commitment to the "Kuyate." Once complete, this transformation of Bala's status, which shifts both his royal and ethnic loyalty, is irreversible. The unalterability of Bala's new social position accounts for the seriousness and solemnity of Sumanguru's tone when he says, "I will cut your Achilles tendons." What Sumanguru does here is not to perform the act literally but to signify on his intent to kill the old personality of his new *griot* in the same way a knife would have cut through the "Achilles tendons" of a person. While he has no intent to hurt Bala, Sumanguru wants to sever Bala's "tendons" metaphorically, signifying his affective conviction that no one other than Bala deserves to become his *griot*. The understated meaning of Sumanguru's words is a central feature in African oral poetry. Behind the literal aspect of words, the *griots* convey subtle and implicit meaning through the use of symbolic images.

Because of the transatlantic slave trade, which resulted in the forced transportation of millions of Africans to the Western world, African folklore found its

way to the Americas. In order to preserve the memory of their homelands, ancestors, and cultures, the enslaved Africans held tightly to the folktales and worldviews that they either brought from Africa or learned from their forebears in the Americas. These Africans passed down knowledge of the tales from generation to generation, making it possible for scholars to find their traces in the rich literature of blacks in the Americas.

The African influence in the folklore of the Americas is visible in the similar ways in which tales are told on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. A few examples are in Zora Neale Hurston's book of folklore, *Mules and Men* (1935). Here, Hurston's storytellers develop rhetorical devices that are traceable to cultures and places in Africa. Such devices include opening formulas and calls-and-responses. Examples of opening formula in *Mules* are the sentences, "Well, once upon a time was a good time" in "The Turtle Watch" (p. 84) and "Ah got to say a piece of litery [literary] fust to git mah wind on" in "How Jack Beat the Devil" (p. 47). These phrases are analogous to the ones used in Wolof and Fulani folktales, where they serve to arouse the audience members to listen attentively and participate in the process of the storytelling. The Wolof storyteller begins his or her narrative in a similar way with the formula "leb-on" (there was a story) to which the audience responds "lup-on" (it happened here).

Like the African American formula, the Wolof version invites the audience to listen attentively and participate actively in the process of storytelling by answering to the teller's calls. In *Talking and Testifying* (1977), Geneva Smitherman found in the African American church a call-and-response exchange in which the preacher tells the audience, "Y'all don't want to hear dat so I'm gone leave it alone," to which the congregation responds by saying, "'Naw, Tell it, Reb! Tell it! Tell it!" A similar verbal exchange occurs in Wolof storytelling. Here, the teller establishes a rapport of communication by saying, "Am-on a fi" (it happened here), to which the audience responds by saying, "da na am" (it was so). The sentence "Naw, Tell it, Reb! Tell it! Tell it!" that Smitherman described as a usual formula in African American sermon, rap, comedy, and storytelling is visible in James Baldwin's *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953), when the congregation in the Temple of the Fire Baptized responds to Gabriel's call "Woe is me!" by shouting "'Yes! Tell it! Amen! You preach it, boy." This pattern of call-and-response in the African American sermon is consistent with the Wolof communicative exchange described earlier.

Moreover, the African influence in the Americas is visible in the trickster figures of Brer Rabbit and Brer Dog that Hurston depicts in *Mules* to represent the unequal power relations between planters and slaves during slavery. One example is the tale "What the Rabbit Learned," in which Brer Dog seeks revenge against Brer Rabbit, who had taken the former's girlfriend, Miss Saphronie, from him and cut his tongue during their previous conflict in "How Brer Dog Lost His Beautiful Voice." In "What the Rabbit Learned," Brer Rabbit and Brer Dog were walking

peacefully in the bush, as if no grudge existed between them, when, all of a sudden, the Rabbit heard the sound of barking dogs. Noting that Brer Rabbit was frightened by the sound of the hounds, Brer Dog told the Rabbit, "Ain't we done held a convention and passed a law dogs run no mo' rabbits? Don't pay no 'tention to every lil'l bit of barkin' you hear" (pp. 146–147). The Rabbit, who knew that some trick was being played against him, responded, "Yeah, but all de dogs ain't been to no convention, and anyhow some of dese fool dogs ain't got no better sense than to run over dat law and break it up." Saying this, Brer Rabbit took off, remembering the old-time saying "Run every time de bush shake" (p. 147).

The intelligence, charm, wisdom, and verbal dexterity that Brer Rabbit exhibits in his capacity to outsmart Brer Dog in the bush signifies on the subversive strategies that slaves developed to outwit the slave holders and slave catchers who chased them when they ran away from plantations. The wisdom that makes Brer Rabbit "run every time de bush shakes" alludes to the intelligence that the African slaves in America such as Frederick Douglass and Solomon Northup demonstrated by running away or hiding in secret places whenever they were chased by cruel slave owners. Such subversive strategies of resistance derive from the vigilance that African tricksters like Leuk, who is Brer Rabbit's grandfather, used to survive oppression in the mythological world of Ndoumbelane. In Birago Diop's "The Tricks of Leuk-the-Hare" (1966), Leuk charmed a princess and escaped her father's plan to execute him by simply telling the king, "Bour [your majesty] . . . you cannot kill the father of your grandchild!" (p. 81). The wisdom and verbal skill that Leuk used to subvert a stratified traditional Wolof society is the source from which Brer Rabbit and the African slaves in the Americas drew in order to outsmart their oppressors.

African folklore has a rich history that is traceable from the traditional epic of Sunjata to the contemporary literature of blacks in the Americas. In both Africa and the Americas, folklore has served as an important means of entertainment, education, and cultural survival. The Africans who survived the Middle Passage have used it to preserve their past and resist domination. In this sense, black writers of the Americas have inherited the role of preservers of the past that *griots* used to play in Africa.

Babacar M'Baye

See Also African American Folklore; Anansi; Ethnic Folklore.

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Aging

Folklore relating to material objects, narratives, and beliefs about death. Aging is the natural process by which living organisms develop biologically and grow older. This process includes a decline in biological functions and ultimately death. In human beings, gender is an important variable in the aging process; biological changes affecting women have profound social, psychological, emotional, medical, and economic consequences. Ageism, whether personal or institutional, is the stereotyping of and discrimination against individuals on the basis of age, and specifically old age. Reflecting societal attitudes toward aging, folkloric images of maturing women range from the nurturing, postmenopausal wise woman endowed with supernatural powers (Germany's Mother Holle and the Oracle in *The Matrix*) to the ugly, hungry hag (Russia's Baba Yaga and Gretel's witch) whose disposition evokes terror.

In the United States and Canada and throughout most of the industrialized world, an unprecedented number of individuals are living well into old age. In 1900 in the United States, life expectancy for men was 48.3 years and for women

51.1 years; the number of individuals who survived to old age was relatively small. However, because of medical innovations and advances in public health education, the number of older people in the U.S. population has tripled since the turn of the century.

In *The Coming of Age* (1972), French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir examines the universally grim plight of older people throughout time. She describes how they suffer from lack of respect from younger people, loss in productivity, and other negative experiences; she provides poignant evidence that most cultures deny the intrinsic worth of older people despite their repertoires of fables that exalt the elderly. It is a modern phenomenon that women live longer than men by approximately seven years. As a result, women outnumber men in the general population, especially at the older end of the age spectrum. Judith Worell characterizes the increasingly long lives of women compared with men in the second half of the twentieth century as a “historic feminization of the world” (2001, 96).

Because of social double standards regarding gender and aging, many women grow old with much greater apprehension than do men. The dread of growing older—and so purportedly less sexually attractive—in patriarchal societies is a long-held attitude illustrated by the saying, “Old age is woman’s hell,” attributed to Ninon de Lenclos, a seventeenth-century French writer and courtesan. Whereas a man’s graying hair may mark him as “distinguished” by age, a same-aged woman suffers social denigration for having lost her youthful physical appearance.

Consider the social significance of feminine beauty and youth reflected in the folktales collected by Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm in the nineteenth century. In many of the original 168 tales, youthful beauty is not only emphasized as the ideal for women, it is associated with goodness, wealth, and social privilege. In contrast, aged women are generally characterized as mean and ugly villains. Although most of these tales are no longer widely recognized by North American audiences, those that have survived in the contemporary imagination—and marketplace—include those in which beautiful young women (such as Cinderella, Snow White, and Sleeping Beauty) in conflict with infamous older women dominate the plot.

The youthful feminine ideal has been perpetuated during the past 150 years through adaptations and retellings of folktales produced by the children’s book and film industries, most notably by the Walt Disney Company’s films and related product merchandising. Compare, for example, the benevolent Sea Witch of Hans Christian Andersen’s tale, “The Little Mermaid,” with Ursula, the terrifying virago of the Disney film of the same name. It has long been noted there are few roles for women film actors over forty. When images of women of advanced years do appear in film, popular culture, and narrative folklore, they are often poor and ill or overly ambitious, menacing, or otherwise distasteful—self-absorbed wealthy matrons, witches with gnarled arthritic hands, impoverished peasant ladies

laboring in the fields, black-draped widows in mourning, and old hags devouring children for food.

The late twentieth-century boom in the cosmetic industry and an increasing demand for cosmetic plastic surgeries attest to the struggle that some women, especially those from the middle and upper classes, face with self-esteem as they age. Their desire for continued social acceptance, fear of losing the opportunity for sexual intimacy, and anxiety about the potential onset of debilitating medical conditions are among the reasons that they view aging as a psychological challenge. While rural Mexicans and Canadians are more likely to exhibit the traditional respect accorded to the aged than are Americans reared on unrelentingly promoted images of “Generation X,” old women are increasingly invisible in these societies as well, and their life experiences dismissed as irrelevant.

While women’s medical problems that accompany aging are similar to those of aging men, among whom heart disease and cancer are leading causes of death, older women suffer more frequently than men from gender-linked medical conditions such as osteoporosis, urinary incontinence, insomnia, and depression. And unlike those of previous generations, today’s geriatric illnesses are chronic rather than short term. Chronic illnesses have economic consequences that affect women disproportionately, including the likelihood that middle-aged women will provide their unpaid eldercare. Coupled with their own weakening and, in some cases, crippling medical conditions, elderly women commonly find their financial security at risk. In the United States, “women over the age of sixty-five are twice as poor as men in the same age group” (Eisler). And older (unmarried) lesbians, particularly if African American, face the distinct possibility of homelessness upon the death of a property-owning partner (Shavers).

Ironically, older women were historically the first medical practitioners; as such, they enjoyed social reverence. As healers, their curative knowledge and power aligned them with the wisdom of ancient goddesses. Today, their wisdom is often scorned as “old wives’ tales.” Many historians and anthropologists locate the Spanish Inquisition in Europe as the beginning of the demise of the “wise old women” archetype. Threatened by the status of women healers, Catholic Church authorities declared them agents of the Devil and effectively changed public opinion about them through witch hunts. In addition, traditional myths of Pagan origin were revised to further stigmatize the image of the once-powerful older woman.

To counter some of the stereotypes about women and aging, a proliferation of publications began appearing in the last decades of the twentieth century, including *Women of a Certain Age* by Lilia Rubin (1979); *In Full Flower: Aging Women, Power and Sexuality* (1993) by Lois W. Banner; *The Fountain of Age* (1993) by Betty Friedan; and *The New Ourselves, Growing Older: Women Aging with Knowledge and Power* (1987; 1994) by Paula Doress-Worters. In 1989, feminist

studies reached a significant milestone with the first issue of the *Journal of Women and Aging*, a scholarly venue for interdisciplinary research.

Public policy in the United States is increasingly reflecting a demographic shift in favor of aging women. While reproductive choice, inequality in the workforce, and child care were the prominent social issues in the later part of the twentieth century, the concerns of older women are becoming more evident in the new millennium. These include displaced homemakers, widowhood, elder caregiving, social isolation and poverty, and gender-related medical research and health care.

Older women's activism has spawned several influential advocacy organizations. Two of them, the Gray Panthers and the Red Hat Society, have produced positive new icons to celebrate the aging process; and there has been a renewed interest among scholars about colonial midwives, Mexican *curanderas* (folk healers), Hopi/Navajo Spider Woman stories, to name a few areas of research. For example, today we know that pre-Columbian Aztec elder women participated in the ritual ingestion of *pulque*, a liquid fermented from the maguey plant, along with male priests.

Recognition of the inestimable value of older women is, however, emerging in literature. Ultima, the *curandera* of Rudolfo Anaya's *Bless Me, Ultima*, the most widely read novel by a Mexican American author, is a prime example. Sharply diverging from typical characterizations of elderly women, Ultima represents goodness and wisdom. She also serves as tradition bearer and a model for keeping cultural traditions alive.

Gilda Baeza Ortego

See Also Medicine, Folk; Women's Folklore.

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Altar, Home

Home altars are image-laden material expressions of personal devotions created to serve as sacred places of communication and mediation between altar makers and their chosen deity or deities. The creation and use of personal home altars is an ancient women's religious tradition practiced in cultures worldwide. The tradition engages women from diverse religious backgrounds, including Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Hindu, Buddhist, various sects of the African diaspora such as Brazilian Candomblé, Cuban Santería, and others. The word *altar* generally defines a sacred site set apart for communication between deities and humans, but another sense of the term suggests that an altar forms a threshold or gateway, a meeting place of the sacred and the mundane. In contrast to the formal altars found in churches and temples, a woman's home altar informally expresses her faith and devotion.

Consisting of a special grouping of selected religious images and other symbols, a home altar visually represents its maker's personal relationship with the deities, saints, or ancestors she depends upon for help and comfort in her daily life. Never merely representational, the home altar also serves as an active performance site for the rituals and prayers that are instrumental for engaging relationships with divine resources. In many families, the tradition can be traced back for generations, but it is also evolving in North America as new religious and spiritual options emerge. Within the past forty years, feminist, lesbian, and women's art movements have brought new practitioners to the altar tradition through the emergence of the women's spirituality movement. Neo-Pagan revisionist movements such as Wicca also embrace the practice. Even individuals with no affiliation whatsoever simply adapt personal altar making to their own beliefs and needs.

Still, for most practitioners, the tradition is maternal in lineage; by observation or instruction, women learn to keep an altar from their mothers and grandmothers. They also learn the power of communicating at the altar—saying prayers, making petitions for help, and giving thanks—as a way of maintaining alliances with favored deities or interlocutors. Traditional home altars often feature a central religious image passed down within the family. A Hindu woman's altar might feature Durga; a Mexican Catholic's altar might display the Virgin of Guadalupe.

Mothers often donate images to their newly married daughters' altars, or leave altar objects and images to them as a legacy after death. Through this image, a woman inherits a relationship with a particular deity who, like a revered family member, is known, honored, and relied upon for help.

The history of women's creation and use of domestic altars continues from ancient times to the present. In the West, the earliest home altars known to have been created by women date from the Neolithic period (4000–6000 BCE) in Old Europe and Anatolia (now Turkey). Reserved primarily as sites for presenting offerings or sacrifices to fecund, earth-based goddesses and their consort gods, ancient altars presumably were used to enhance fertility, to invite protection, and to memorialize ancestors.

These same functions prevail today; women still pray at their home altars for a good birth, for security of home and family, and to honor the dead. In its long history—evident in the archaeological and historical record for Mycenaean, Greek, Roman, Pagan, and early Christian cultures—the domestic altar in Western tradition has changed little in basic construction. To view a contemporary Catholic Mexican American woman's home altar side by side with a Transylvanian house cult table from the fifth millennium BCE or to see an altar dedicated to the goddess by a feminist in 1985 next to an altar dedicated to the goddess in Mycenae 4,000 years earlier, immediately confirms their visual similarity.

On a simple table or other platform surface, votive statues or pictures of local deities are surrounded by instruments for communicating with them: lamps, candles, incense burners, amulets, and offerings such as shells and flowers. Contemporary altars also feature printed materials such as prayer books and secular items such as family photographs and personal mementos, but the visual aesthetic of the altar is consistent, and its communicative purpose has remained virtually unchanged for millennia.

Though bound by certain conventions, the tradition still invites variation; no altar looks exactly the same, nor is it used in exactly the same way. Certain items (the inherited central image, for example) may remain for a lifetime, but home altars are not fixed sites; they change as the women who make them change. Altar makers affirm the particularity of the tradition to themselves as individuals and as women; for them, personal devotion trumps institutional dogma. At their altars, women remake and reinvent the usefulness of cultural symbols, both sacred and secular, according to their own histories, purposes, needs, desires, and beliefs. Altar makers take the received aspects of the tradition and wed them to a creative—and often highly imaginative—impulse. For example, amid typical saint statues and votive candles arranged on a shelf or dresser, folk Catholic home altars may be covered with family photos, display pictures of local political figures, feature unusual personal symbols such as a child's stuffed animal, or make use of homemade decorative effects such as hand-embroidered altar cloths



Family members of Kim Sun-il, who was kidnapped in Iraq, mourn beside their family altar in Busan, South Korea in 2004. (AP/Wide World Photos)

or glittered paper plates. It is not unusual to find modern altar makers using their home desks and computers as the base around which their altars are composed.

The visual aesthetic of altars is defined by a propensity for layering and accumulation. Objects and symbols are integrated into a coherent visual field that marks their interdependence and connection to each other. Altars exemplify the process that feminist artist Miriam Schapiro aptly named *femmage* (derived from “collage” and “assemblage”) referring to women’s artistic process of collecting and creatively joining seemingly disparate elements into a functional whole (Meyer and Schapiro, 66–69).

All the objects on the altar are signs of relationship; each one tells a story of attachment to others, whether they are sacred, social, or nature-based relations. An image of the Virgin Mary testifies to the altar maker’s ongoing relationship with her; a son’s photo bespeaks his mother’s care; a small heap of stones signifies a love of the earth.

The altar specifies a context for building and sustaining relationships by serving as a site to seek divine help in initiating, repairing, restoring, remembering, and protecting the vitality of human social life. Appeals made there constitute a catalog of situations requiring care and help such as healing the sick, seeking a blessed union in love or marriage, or finding a new home. The intimacy and familiarity of the altar provides an ideal setting for meditation, prayer, and petition.

The home altar's longevity is no doubt related to the singular privacy it affords in giving women a place to speak to the divine without restraint. There, a woman meets her deities and speaks to them with assurance in their mutual ability to create change and to heal. Women ascribe great efficacy to the personal prayers and petitions for help made at their altars. What women ask for most—and receive—at their altars is healing. Healing of body, mind, and spirit is the active result of the good relationships between women and their divine allies promoted at the altar site. Asking and receiving fashion a bond of trust, and this bond fortifies a fundamental labor performed at the altar: the movement from problem to solution in the work of living. As Mexican American altar maker Margarita Guerrero affirms, "Here with my saints and the Virgin I have accomplished many things. I have prayed and they answer me. And always I have made things better for myself and others" (Turner, 47).

Kay Turner

See Also African Folklore; African American Folklore; Art, Folk; Latino Folklore; Material Culture; Women's Folklore.

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Amerasians: Folklores of Mixed Heritage, Mixed Race Asian Americans

Amerasians are war babies, or so the folklore goes. The myth is that they continue to be children of war, at war with themselves, infantilized by their public image as the children of U.S. soldiers and passive and sexualized Asian and Pacific Islander women. The other myth is that the Amerasians are a population of the past; now that U.S. wars in Asia are over, why should there continue to be "war babies"? This folklore ignores contemporary wars in West Asia (Afghanistan and Iraq) as well as U.S. military bases in those regions.

Asian American Grocery Stores

In North America, running a grocery store has long been one prominent means of making a living for immigrants and their descendants, and hence ethnographers have researched ethnic grocery stores to study aspects of diaspora culture. The anthropological literature on ethnic grocery stores tends to treat such issues as transnationality, consumerism, and the socioeconomic statuses of store owners and customers, but ethnic grocery stores additionally constitute rich loci for studying from a folkloric perspective a spectrum of everyday sociocultural human expressive culture, both material and oral.

Ethnic grocery stores come in various sizes and types—from mom-and-pop stores to large-scale markets—whose clientele and merchandise vary depending upon location. Whereas one store may cater to a single ethnic group if situated within that group's urban enclave, another store located in a suburb or smaller city may function as a pan-Asian outlet serving multiple ethnic groups, including non-Asians. Although most major supermarkets today carry Asian foods (due to the growing popularity of Asian cuisines within mainstream culture), ethnic grocery stores continue to thrive as homes-away-from-home for immigrants, whose lives they support tangibly and intangibly.

For immigrants it is important to have a place in which to experience the familiar, and the sights and scents of fondly recalled imported products in an ethnic grocery store bring a sense of comfort to those living in diaspora. Food is one of the most important constituents of ethnic tradition, playing a crucial part in the maintenance of quotidian diets and in the observance of religious rituals, calendar customs, and cultural celebrations. But the preservation of ethnic foodways depends upon the



Cans of Maruha seasoned squid are displayed at Mitsuwa Marketplace in Arlington Heights, Illinois, 2004. (Getty Images)

availability of the proper ingredients. Many immigrants maintain faith in foodstuffs imported from their native countries for the sense of security that they provide, and sometimes because of skepticism and disapproval of those products' American counterparts. The more essential a food to the immigrants' ethnic foodways, the more loyal they are likely to be to a homeland variety and brand, because flavors are something ingrained in the taste buds from childhood. Thus the proprietors of successful ethnic grocery stores, exercising culturally bestowed insight, accommodate the needs and preferences of the ethnic communities that they serve, whose members reciprocate with loyal patronage.

The non-victual also contributes to a store's welcoming environment. The interior may be adorned with business-related lucky charms, amulets, and figurines (coins, jade, knots, beckoning cats, wall hangings bearing such Chinese characters as *fu* [fortune] and *shou* [longevity]), as well as posters advertising products. Due to the material presentation of ethnicity on site, a trip to the ethnic grocery store may be construed metaphorically as a trip to the homeland.

The friendly embrace of the place is not created by materials alone, as multiple types of verbal lore circulate within the store. Here immigrants—speaking the native language, English, or some hybrid of the two (Chinglish, Hinglish, Hmonglish, Japanglish, etc.)—can exchange information ranging from frivolous gossip to legal advice. A clerk-shopper dialogue filled with bantering, bargaining, and joking reflects cultural values and gender roles as well as humor. More formulaic lore including proverbs, riddles, and folktales may be recited among those who share the same cultural background.

An ethnic grocery store is for ethnic communities not merely a place to shop for food, but a social hub and a conduit of folklore. The store provides a space in which people encounter others living in the same circumstances, with whom they share not only cultural knowledge but also New World experiences. Exuding a homeland atmosphere that links immigrants and their descendents to their ethnic traditions and folkways, the ethnic grocery store supports the continuity of traditions in diaspora and their perseverance through subsequent generations.

Ayako Yoshimura

In general, an Amerasian is a person with one parent who is a citizen of the United States (e.g., U.S. military personnel or government employees, or American expatriates or business people) and one parent who is a citizen of an Asian nation. *Amerasian* is a term that refers to parents of different nationality or citizenship (i.e. the United States and Asia), whereas the terms *Eurasian* and *Afroasian* have come to signify more specific racial mixing. Because an Amerasian could be someone with one Asian American parent and one Asian national parent, the person could technically have two parents of the same ethnic or racialized "Asian" heritage. However, the folklore of the Amerasian requires that the parents be seen as members of "enemy" nations, with the parents' relationship often presumed to be one in which the father abandoned the mother in a reworking of Puccini's opera "Madama Butterfly" (1904). The myth of the Tragic Amerasian stems from this

racial-gender dynamic, in which the result of such a “tragic” narrative must be a confused—and tragic—identity.

Related to the earlier term, *Eurasian*, used primarily in the context of the French colonization of Southeast Asia, the term *Amerasian* is assumed to have been coined by author Pearl S. Buck, and it was given legal definition through Public Law 97-359. Providing for the immigration rights to children of U.S. citizens (presumably the father) if there is reason to believe that the aliens were born in Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, or Thailand after December 31, 1950, and before October 22, 1982, this law could be modified to include Filipino Amerasians from U.S. colonialism both before and after World War II; Japanese Amerasians from World War II; Okinawan Amerasians from the continuing U.S. military occupation of Okinawa; Pacific Islander Amerasians from Guam and other places where U.S. military occupation continues.

Other laws, such as the Vietnamese Amerasian Homecoming Act of 1988, have provided for the immigration of Amerasians to the U.S. A common folk belief often held by Amerasians and their mothers immigrating under this law was that they would be reunited with their American fathers; and that they would be accepted in U.S. society as “Americans,” precisely because they were often not accepted within Vietnamese society. In the early 1970s, the term was often considered synonymous with the term *Asian American*, thus the 1971-founded UCLA publication, *Amerasia Journal*, for example, is a journal of Asian American Studies, and does not focus on the Amerasian population.

Wei Ming Dariotis

See Also Chinese Folklore; Ethnic Folklore; Foodways; Japanese Folklore.

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American Indian Folklore Scholarship

The historical and contemporary study of American Indian folklore in North America.

In its broadest articulations, American Indian folklore encompasses the verbal, customary, and material culture of North, Central, and South America. It also includes both the genres of expressive culture as well as the approaches of folklorists whose scholarly net has been cast in increasingly larger and larger expanses over the past few decades to include the expressive and aesthetic dimensions of all human interaction. A survey of American Indian folklore itself would be impossible; a survey of American Indian folklore scholarship, however, is both possible and useful as an introduction into American Indian expressive culture. The scholarship of American Indian folklore is rich and diverse both in its description and explanation of American Indian culture. Further, its methodological and theoretical contributions to the field of folklore comprise an integral part of the historical development of the study of folklore in the United States.

Studied within the United States, American Indian folklore has been dominated by a focus on North American Indian tribes. Many surveys and collections of American Indian folklore and culture restrict themselves to North America without explanation. The assumption that “American Indian” or “Native American” refers to indigenous people within North America is changing, albeit slowly.

North American Indian folklore is an integral part of daily and ritual life both as practice and as record. Preliterate people have performed and recorded cultural histories, events, and beliefs in enduring forms that comprise folklore genres in and of themselves—rituals, narratives, pottery, and rock paintings—from the very beginning. The collection and study of American Indian folklore by *non-Indians* also began immediately, as soon as contact was established. Upon hearing Christopher Columbus’s account of his first expedition to the Americas, Spanish friar Ramón Pané joined Columbus for his second expedition, spending more than two years as a missionary among the Taínos people of Hispaniola. He was commissioned not only to convert the indigenous people, but to “discover and understand . . . the beliefs and idolatries of the Indians” (1999 [1498], 3). The result of his work is the first book written in the Americas in a European language and describes the myths, religious ceremonies, language, and daily customs of the Taínos. This dual mandate of understanding the indigenous people in order to convert them was carried on in the seventeenth century by a succession of Jesuit priests, and in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by a host of other Christian missionaries whose religious efforts dovetailed with personal and intellectual interests in the peoples they were attempting to convert. By the late nineteenth century, the collection of American Indian folklore was taken over by

scholars with an equally ambitious if secular zeal not to save souls but to save whole cultures. U.S. policy toward American Indians in the nineteenth century was a mix of outright antagonism and misguided charity, both of which resulted in physical and cultural genocide. The fear in the scholarly community was that American Indian culture would soon be wiped out, whether by having no one left to continue it, or by assimilating the remaining American Indians into the culture of the colonial powers. This fear spurred many anthropologists into the field to record cultural practices before they disappeared forever.

At the vanguard of this charge were two men: John Wesley Powell, Director of the Bureau of American Ethnology; and Franz Boas, anthropologist, ethnographer, and close ally of the American Folklore Society. Their students would dominate anthropological and folklore research in American Indian studies for the next fifty years, including Frank Cushing, James Mooney, Washington Matthews, and Alice Fletcher (Powell), and Ruth Benedict, Ruth Bunzel, Melville Jacobs, Alfred L. Kroeber, Robert H. Lowie, Elsie Clews Parsons, Paul Radin, Gladys Reichard, Frank Speck, and John Swanton (Boas).

From the perspective of folklore research, Franz Boas has had the greatest enduring impact. Boas refuted the theory of cultural evolution that suggested cultures evolved in a linear path, pioneered the ethnographic method favored by many folklorists today, and attempted close translation of oral traditions, myths in particular. Boas and his focus on American Indian culture and folklore also heavily shaped the formative years of the American Folklore Society. His close alliance with William Wells Newell, founder of the *Journal of American Folklore*, ensured that American Indian folklore would be at the center of the nascent field of folklore, a topic that appears not only in the charter for the publication, but also in every issue of the journal for the first twenty-four issues, in every one of the first thirty-nine volumes, and regularly afterwards for decades to come.

Due to the historical origins of the study of American Indian folklore, oral traditions generally, and myth specifically, have received the greatest amount of attention. At its outset, the American Folklore Society was divided into two groups: the literary folklorists and the anthropological folklorists, a division that continues to describe the departmental homes for academic folklorists today. The division initially seems paradoxical. Housed almost exclusively in English departments, the literary folklorists had a broad sense of the lore but a restricted sense of the folk. Literary folklorists were willing to accommodate both oral and customary lore, but only for the Europeans and European immigrants. For anthropologists, however, where culture comprised their entire enterprise, only oral traditions were given over to folklore. The “folk,” on the other hand, included Euro-Americans, African Americans, and Native Americans. The result was that study of American Indians was tackled almost exclusively by the anthropological folklorists and therefore focused specifically on oral narrative.

Henry Rowe Schoolcraft was an ethnologist who spent much of his life studying American Indians. (Library of Congress)



The first person to devote himself to the thorough collection of a tribe's oral traditions was Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, labeled by some as the father of American folklore. Schoolcraft was the first U.S. Indian agent for the Ojibwa and married Jane Johnston, a member of the Ojibwa who collaborated with him on his work documenting the oral traditions of her tribe. Although Schoolcraft followed the trends of his day by editing his collections with the stylistic flourishes of his fellow Victorian writers, his work was a landmark effort that spurred other writers, most notably Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, to pay attention to American Indian narrative as literature.

Schoolcraft, an avid but amateur collector, was followed by Franz Boas and his students who took a far more systematic, scientific approach to the collection and analysis of folklore. Ruth Bunzel's work among the Zuni highlights this shift with her careful interlineal translations that attempt to preserve the structure and aesthetics of the myths she recorded (1933). Ruth Benedict's study of Zuni narrative remains a classic work today, examining American Indian narratives for what they reveal not only about Zuni culture, but also about narrative form, function, and aesthetics (1935).

The attempts by Boas and his students to understand oral narrative structurally and thematically as well as culturally were adopted by folklorists in English departments as well, most notably by Stith Thompson, whose interest in narrative at the level of the tale type and motif guided his compilation of a century of North American Indian storytelling (1929). Thompson's book is organized by broad thematic categories, gathering tribes from across the continent into dialogue with one another, favoring recurring themes over cultural distinctions. The bulk of the collections of American Indian narrative, however, have favored the

former, a solution that reflects practical feasibility and a postmodern recognition of the variability of culture, the importance of context, and a reflection of the political atmosphere in which many indigenous people struggle to overcome gross generalizations of an ascribed ethnic identity in favor of more personally meaningful articulations of tribal identity. More than any other form, these collections of tribal narratives have dominated American Indian folklore. Early collections such as those from the Bureau of American Ethnology were typically rich in ethnographic data. Subsequent collections by folklorists who viewed their work as collection rather than social science or literary analysis, published stories with little analysis and only brief introductions and references to the motifs that appeared within each text.

In the 1960s and 1970s, however, as folklorists began to think first about context, and then about performance, the collections of American Indian myths began to include biographical information about storytellers, thorough cultural glosses for each story, and full repertoires of individual storytellers. These performer and performance-centered approaches helped move the study of American Indian oral narrative from a window into tribal culture—data for the anthropological analysis of culture—to a literary tradition worthy of study in its own right.

The recognition of the power and poetics of American Indian narrative gave birth to the politically charged ethnopoetics movement in folklore studies of the 1970s and 1980s. Ethnopoetic analysis strived to highlight the aesthetic qualities of oratory, particularly among cultures dominated by oral rather than written traditions. Its greatest proponents emerged out of American Indian studies, most notably Dennis Tedlock in his study of the narrative poetry of the Zuni Indians (1972). At the same time, Dell Hymes was exploring structural aspects of oral narrative, describing his work as “structural in method, poetic in purpose” (1981, 7). These studies brought the issue of translation and transcription to the fore and resulted in a number of works that provided strategies for reading American Indian narratives of the past while arguing for the use of verbatim recordings in the present (see Swann and Krupat 1987 and Swann 1992). While ethnopoetics has receded in the decades since, attention to the poetics of verbal art has left an indelible mark on folklore studies by drawing attention to how folklorists can most effectively translate oral narratives from any culture onto the printed page.

Of the wealth of narrative genres performed within American Indian cultures, the cross-cultural trinity of myth, legend, and folktale has guided much of the scholarship in folklore studies. In many American Indian cultures, origin myths comprise the foundations for culture, society, and religious belief, and are shared regularly in ritual, articulating the power of the spoken word to create, not just describe, the world. Some of the most common creation myths that describe the origin of the world and its inhabitants are myths of the earth-diver, emergence from below ground, and the union of sky or sun father and earth or moon mother. Other

origin stories provide explanations for important aspects of tribal life, including the placement of the sun, moon, and stars, the origin of corn, social taboos, and marriage rules. Myths and legends typically blur in American Indian narrative, where time is not marked clearly as mythical or historical. Migration stories, and encounters with supernatural beings, for example, are referred to both as myth and legend in folklore scholarship, highlighting the lack of utility of these etic categories. This blurring has also impacted how scholars have approached folklore as evidence of cultural and historical life. Of much greater concern outside folklore studies than within it has been the extent to which oral traditions can inform our understanding of historical events and beliefs. American Indian writers and activists such as Vine Deloria Jr. have argued that creation myths should be held with the same regard as archaeological evidence for determining historical migrations, land claims, and repatriation claims (1997). Anthropologist Ronald J. Mason takes the opposite point of view, valuing native oral traditions within their cultural contexts, but not as part of a valid historiography. Folklorists have tended to avoid such arguments by focusing on the analysis of emic systems of belief and the assumption that folklore is an intensely powerful tool for understanding the present.

Common tale types and themes in American Indian narrative in addition to creation myths include tales of culture heroes, spiritual journeys, animals, and tricksters. Trickster in particular has received a lion's share of attention. A figure cast both as a culture hero and as insatiable and self-serving, both tricked and trickster, trickster and his narrative cycles are common throughout North America, with different animals serving in the role according to region—raven in the Northwest, coyote in the Southwest and Plains, and rabbit in the Southeast. Autobiographies and life histories have also been widely recorded and analyzed, often by anthropologists who felt that a culture could not be truly understood unless captured holistically and in the personal particulars of a single life lived. With the recognition of personal experience narratives as a viable and valid category of folk narrative, in the 1980s, narratives that captured the contemporary individual experience began to be included in general surveys and case studies of American Indian narrative.

While oral narrative has continued to dominate the study of American Indian folklore, the full range of lenses and theories applied in folklore scholarship have also been applied to the breadth of expressive genres of American Indian folklore. Whether as isolated "texts" embedded within larger performance contexts, or approached on the macro level as coherent, complex events such as festivals and rituals, oral, aural, visual, material, kinesthetic, and customary lore among the American Indian tribes of North America has been surveyed broadly and deeply, though not always evenly. Some tribes have received the bulk of scholarly attention—the Navajo, Apache, Zuni, Sioux, and Anishinabe (also known as the Chippewa and Ojibwa)—while others have been virtually ignored in the folklore scholarship, particularly tribes that have not received federal recognition.

Similarly, some genres and themes have garnered more attention than others. In the study of material culture, a handful of artistic forms have emerged as dominant in one region or another, garnering the bulk of the scholarly attention. While pottery was made across the continent, it has remained particularly vital in the Southwest, where pueblo potters in particular have thrived. Folklorists have been especially effective at exploring individual artistry among these pueblo potters, making names such as Helen Cordero, Lucy Lewis, Lillian Salvador, and Wanda Aragon widely recognizable in folklore, art history, and art collector circles alike (see Babcock, Monthan, and Monthan 1992). Weaving has also been studied in the Southwest, particularly among the Navajo; wood carving, particularly masks but also totem poles, in the Northwest; beadwork in the Plains, upper Midwest, and Southwest, and basket weaving in the Southwest and Southeast.

Folklorists and ethnomusicologists have also conducted significant work in the study of music and dance, particularly as embedded in specific social and religious contexts. The systematic study of American Indian music began approximately forty years after the more general study of American Indian culture. Many of the early collectors were focused on the analysis of American Indian music as a means to understand “primitive music” and indigenous styles. In the last few decades of the nineteenth century, European and European-American composers seized upon these collections as inspiration for their own compositions, an impulse that emerged at the same time as the Arts and Crafts movement that drew similar inspiration from “the folk” for architecture, domestic design, and decorative arts. Also at the turn of the century, comparative musicologists (later ethnomusicologists) had begun to study American Indian music both as an artistic form worthy of broad audience, as well as part of the ceremonial lives of American Indians. Alice Cunningham Fletcher working with the Omaha and Pawnee and Jesse Walter Fewkes with the Passamaquoddy helped blaze the trail, followed by Boas’s student George Herzog who studied American Indian music across the United States, and Frances Densmore who became one of the most prolific collectors and scholars of American Indian music, publishing over a hundred books and articles on the topic.

Many of these studies were comparative. Herzog, for example, not only compared music from one tribe to another, but also ambitiously attempted to isolate key stylistic markers in Ghost Dance songs throughout the Great Basin (1935). The study of American Indian music continues to be informed both by comparative studies as well as tribally focused case studies that analyze music traditions within their specific social and cultural contexts, whether at the level of the tribe, or of the particular event or phenomenon. Bruno Nettl has published treatises on “primitive” music generally (1956), as well as on Blackfoot music more specifically (1989). James H. Howard has studied tribal music and dance forms among the Oklahoma and Mississippi Choctaw (with Victoria Lindsay Levine, 1990), as well as pan-Indian forms throughout Oklahoma (1983). William K. Powers has

worked most closely with the Oglala Sioux, but has also tackled the pan-Indian phenomenon of the powwow (1990). In fact, the growth of intertribal powwows has engendered wide discussion of American Indian music and dance, particularly within the context of cultural borrowing and the negotiation of identities, both tribal and ethnic.

The construction of various collective identities—ethnic, cultural, regional, gendered, occupational, religious, political, and national—through expressive culture is a common focus in folklore studies. American Indian folklore has been most often addressed as part of ethnic folklore. American Indians are grouped with immigrant populations who have maintained a distinct ethnic identity within a separate nation's borders. One major result of this classification has been a focus on how identity, and specifically ethnic identity, is constructed through folklore. Tribally focused studies have facilitated this approach, resulting in the analysis of tribal lore that implicitly argues for a distinct tribal identity. To perform a particular ritual, narrate a particular story, hunt with a particular weapon, or shape a particular type of pot has been studied as an expression of one's group identity. Such studies can serve as powerful statements about distinct tribal identity, particularly in contrast to pan-Indianism. Pan-Indianism describes patterns shared broadly across tribes to articulate a common American Indian ethnicity and shared cultural traits, many of which are distinct from any one tribe, though often owing their origins to one or another. The very concept of pan-Indianism has been highly politicized. At one end of the spectrum, the term has been used as a synonym with the loss of tribal culture, and at the other end, descriptive of collective movements that unite American Indians as a coherent ethnic group. The concept has received particular attention in studies of American Indian music and dance, not least of which is because of the explosive growth of powwows across the continent.

Tribal, intertribal, and pan-Indian identities are often explored as part of more general processes of cultural borrowing. As the evolutionary models of culture of the early nineteenth century disappeared, scholars shifted away from analysis that presupposed authentic folklore as distinct from deteriorated forms corrupted by outside influences, particular European, particularly biblical. Today, folklorists examine expressive culture as part of a dynamic system of cultural exchange.

Tom Mould

See Also American Indian Tales; Ethnic Folklore.

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American Indian Tales

The traditional narratives of American Indians. By the time Christopher Columbus reached what Europeans came to perceive as a “New World” in the late fifteenth century, hundreds of distinct culture groups existed in North America. Even five centuries after the beginnings of the contact with European societies, which led to the decimation and, in some cases, extermination of many Native American populations, primarily through virgin soil epidemics, the U.S. federal government today still recognizes more than three hundred different American Indian groups in the forty-eight contiguous states. In addition, many communities see themselves as “Native American” without official federal or state recognition. Meanwhile, almost six hundred separate groups of First Nations people maintain their identities in Canada. While many of these groups, both recognized and unrecognized, are culturally related and may have overlapping literary heritages, nevertheless wide diversities in narrative traditions that may not always correspond precisely to the Western genre concepts of folktale and fairy tale have flourished.

Genres

Nevertheless, generic distinctions among Native American narrative traditions generally reflect the same differentiating criteria that William Bascom identified in his international survey of prose folk narratives. Though the differences may not be as definite as they are in the conventional European model of myth, legend, and folktale, story categories usually can be defined in varying permutations of the contrasts between true and fictional, sacred and nonsacred, and whether they are set in the remote past or in the recent past. In some communities, these may represent continua more than oppositions, and some story types may straddle what seem to be contrasting features from a Western perspective. Furthermore, some traditions ignore one or more of the continua when defining narrative genres. Among the Arikara, a group whose traditional homeland was the Northern Plains, for example, two fundamental categories of story have existed: “true stories” and “tales” (now called “fairy tales” by contemporary Arikara). The indigenous term for the latter category is *naa’iikáWĩš*. No indigenous term exists for true stories, so unless a narrative is assigned to a generic category, it is assumed to be true. The true (unmarked) story category includes sacred narratives analogous to myths in the Western sense (which deal with the genesis of sacred medicine bundles and recount events that occurred before the earth assumed its present form and before human institutions developed) as well as “historical legends,” many etiological, which tell of dreams and supernatural encounters. Nonsacred true stories may deal with exploits during warfare, recent historical events, or personal experiences. *Naa’iikáWĩš* include stories about the Coyote trickster, other animal tales, and children’s stories. However, these tales often have the same characters as the true stories, so the basis of distinction may be nebulous. Moreover, different tellers of the same story may disagree on its genre identity.

Currently, the Choctaw, traditional inhabitants of the Southeast—some of whom live in their ancestral homeland in Mississippi and others of whom live in Oklahoma—use only one native-language term for narrative. *Shukha anumpa* literally means “hog talk” (perhaps “hogwash” would be an idiomatic English equivalent) and refers to jokes, tall tales, and animal stories. Choctaws also recognize another genre of stories, for which they use the English phrase “talk of the elders”: creation stories and myths, historical legends, supernatural legends, and prophecy. They also make a temporal distinction between stories that have been passed along from earlier generations of tellers and narratives that describe events that have occurred recently. The latter kind of stories may also be categorized according to their truth value. Among the Dene Nhaa, who live in the Canadian Subarctic, *tonhat’ onh wodihé* encompasses all traditional stories (or “stories of long ago”). Subclasses of narrative include *wodih* (primarily stories about culture heroes and animal people, though also used for accounts of recent events, hunting stories, moral lectures, and prophecies), *nóghe wodihé* (stories about the Wolverine trickster), and *Mbetsun Yendéhshéhi wodihé* (stories about “The Boy Raised



Raven by John Frazer Mills illustrated in “The Wild Woman of the Woods” in *Once upon a Totem* by Christie Harris. (Library of Congress)

by His Grandmother,” a frequent protagonist in Northern Plains and Subarctic narrative traditions). In the Southwestern United States, storytellers at Zuni Pueblo in New Mexico may relate *telapnaawe* (“tales,” which are regarded as fiction) and *chimiky’and’kowa* (stories about the Beginning, which are told as true).

Some of these story genres from various culture groups (and those of the scores of other Native American narrative traditions still being told) correspond more or less to the European-derived concept of folktale and, in some cases, may even share some of the features of fairy tales. Ideally, though, they should be considered first within the indigenous inventory of narrative genres of which they are a part. Trickster stories, almost universal in Native North America, are usually told as fictions, though their principal purpose may be more to teach moral lessons than simply to entertain. Since he transgresses the norms of a society and often suffers discomfiture for doing so, trickster can remind a storyteller’s audience of what they should avoid doing to remain accepted members of their communities. Trickster assumes various guises: the familiar Coyote of the Southern Plains, the Southwest, and California, but also Raven and Crow on the Northwest Coast, Rabbit in the Southeast, Spider among some Plains groups, and anthropomorphic figures such as Saynday among the Kiowa of the Southern

Plains and Nanabozho among the Ojibwe, traditional inhabitants of the Great Lakes area, and among other speakers of Algonquian languages. Frequently, trickster stories from various Indian traditions end with etiological tags, which purport to explain the origins of some aspect of culture or nature. Often, though, these tags serve more to ground the stories in an observable reality than to offer definitive explanations about origins. The indigenous stories with the most similarity to European fairy tales are those that depict the adventures of an unprepossessing central character, often an orphan who lives on the margins of a community, sometimes with a grandparent. Through his or her personal efforts and talents, the assistance of spiritual beings or forces, or luck, the protagonist attains power, prestige, and occasionally material wealth. Like trickster stories, these narratives often have didactic purposes and, particularly when they are set in the mythic past, may be regarded as having some truth.

Despite the inappropriateness of doing so, many early collectors and commentators on American Indian narrative traditions compared them to European fairy tales. One of these collectors was Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, whose *Algic Researches* (1839) was the first important collection of Native American oral literature. Some collectors documented fairy tales that had apparently entered various Native American narrative repertoires from European sources. For example, Stith Thompson's anthology *Tales of the North American Indians* (1929) concludes with a section entitled "Tales Borrowed from Europeans." Included are versions of "The Seven-Headed Dragon" from an Ojibwe source, an Assiniboiné version of "John the Bear," a Zuni retelling of "Cinderella," and a text of the "The Clever Numskull" from the Micmac. Linguist Anthony Mattina translated and published a tape-recorded performance of "The Golden Woman" (1985), a European fairy tale from the repertoire of a Colville storyteller.

Performance Styles

The generic differences and similarities that have manifested themselves in American Indian storytelling are paralleled by differences and similarities associated with narrative performance. In some societies, performance of all narrative genres might be the province of anyone with no particular restrictions on where or when stories might be told. In other communities, though, certain individuals, often cultural elders, might emerge as storytelling specialists, and some performers might have more or less exclusive rights, based perhaps on lineage or clan membership, to particular stories. For example, Edward W. Gifford, an anthropologist, reported that among the Kamia, a California group, what he called "myths" were told on winter nights only by men, who adopted a particular storytelling stance while performing. Storytellers would stand with hands at their sides and sway their bodies slowly from side to side as they narrated. William Jones noted that among the Meskwaki (a Midwestern group formerly known as

the Sauk and Fox), storytellers would sit in a circle and take turns delivering their tales in a pace so rapid and elliptical that outsiders would be unable to follow the thread of narration. The literary style of the Maidu of California has been marked by repetition of words, parallelism, and alternation of prose and poetry. The most successful Clackamas storytellers reminded anthropologist Melville Jacobs of Western actors giving solo readings of plays. Paralinguistic manipulations characterized the performance styles of many Native American narrative traditions. Raconteurs might, for example, adopt different vocal timbres to represent dialogue spoken by a tale's characters. The character Skunk in stories of the Alsea, another California group, would speak in a whining tone. Gestures also played an important role in the delivery of many tales. Some traditions also placed restrictions on when storytelling might occur. Some genres, for instance, were intended exclusively for winter performance, and a narrator who performed a tale in one of these genres in the inappropriate season might face supernatural retribution for doing so. In fact, some societies believed that telling stories might invoke the presence of the creatures whose deeds the tales related. Telling the stories in winter, when beings such as snakes and bears were in hibernation, could prevent that from happening.

Collection and Translation

American Indian storytelling came to the attention of Europeans during the early years of contact. The annual reports filed by the Jesuit missionaries in New France, for example, occasionally mention and summarize stories told in the various groups with whom they came in contact. While the Puritans in New England paid little attention to American Indian verbal art of any sort, explorers and travelers in the middle and southern colonies that eventually became the original thirteen states sometimes included synopses of tales they had heard from Native storytellers in their memoirs and journals. Fuller "texts"—retellings in English—of Native American stories appear in the journals kept by the Corps of Discovery led by Lewis and Clark, as well as in the works of missionaries such as David Zeisberger and John Heckewelder in the early nineteenth century. The first important collection of stories from an American Indian oral tradition was published by Indian agent Henry Rowe Schoolcraft. His *Algic Researches* includes rewritten versions of stories that he had heard from his Ojibwe charges at Sault Ste. Marie and which had been translated by his wife Jane Johnston, who was part Ojibwe. An influential feature of Schoolcraft's collection was the way in which he reworked the Ojibwe stories so they resembled the literary fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm and other European publications during the first half of the nineteenth century. Not attempting at all to represent the manner in which the stories were told, Schoolcraft recast the Ojibwe tales in an ornamented literary style and expurgated materials that he deemed offensive or indecent.

While Schoolcraft's collection bore only a slight resemblance to what the Ojibwe storytellers had related, he deserves credit for recognizing that the stories were indeed works of literary art. His approach to presenting these Ojibwe stories (from which the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow borrowed for his epic poem *The Song of Hiawatha*) set the standard for published reworkings of narratives from various Native American groups that appeared during the 1800s and well into the twentieth century (and which continues in some popularly oriented publications even into the twenty-first century).

Not until the founding of the Bureau of American Ethnology (BAE) in the Smithsonian Institution in 1879 and the contemporaneous fieldwork of Franz Boas and his students in anthropology did a more "scientific" approach to publishing American Indian tales emerge. For the most part, though, the BAE scientists as well as the Boasians viewed recording stories primarily as a way to gather information on other features of Native cultures, especially language. Typically, a Boasian anthropologist would have an Indian storyteller dictate a story in the indigenous language. Sometimes the anthropologist might not even have understood what was being said, but would capture the sounds of the speaker by writing them out phonetically. This laborious process yielded scrupulously exact linguistic texts, which might be published with a literal translation that matched the Native-language words and morphemes with English equivalents. Perhaps a "free" translation would also appear, but it would most likely reflect only the content of the story and nothing of its Native artistry, some of which would have disappeared anyway because of the exigencies of the dictation situation. Literally thousands of stories were collected in this way during the early twentieth century, and many of them were published in highly specialized forums such as museum publications and scholarly journals. Although they could not represent Native American verbal art either accurately or comprehensively, their sheer number make them a valuable resource, to which more recent linguists and translators have returned with considerable success.

The published and archived corpus of Native American tales is vast, but not until the last third of the twentieth century did an approach develop to making this material accessible as indigenous verbal art. During the 1960s and 1970s, several methods for presenting American Indian verbal art in print emerged under the general rubric of "ethnopoetics," a movement that while not exclusively associated with American Indian materials nevertheless found most of its adherents among those anthropologists, literary scholars, translators, and creative writers whose interests were primarily in Native Americana. The goal of ethnopoetics is to preserve the indigenous aesthetic in translations into English and other European languages, usually from literary traditions that are largely oral. Consequently, it involves not only language-to-language translation but also the transformation of orally performed art into written or printed versions. As far as

Hiawatha (Haiohwatha)

Probably legendary Onondaga (Iroquois) chief of the late sixteenth century, celebrated as shaman and culture hero for uniting into one political unit the usually warring Algonquin, Oneida, Mohawk, Cayuga, and Iroquois peoples. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, inspired by Algonquin rather than Iroquois traditions, used the meter of the Finnish folk epic *The Kalevala* in his 1855 verse treatment of Hiawatha's story, *The Song of Hiawatha* (1855), bringing this Native American hero to the attention of a broader audience. There is a considerable body of indigenous legendry concerning Hiawatha and his political activities. One of these legends involves his attempts to persuade the magician and tyrant of the Onondaga tribe, Atatarho, to join the League of the Iroquois.

Atatarho is a ruthless and deadly enemy of the league who manages to wreck its attempts to come together. Eventually, a meeting of all the chiefs is called near the lodge of the great chief, Hiawatha. All the people attend, but Atatarho, who has already caused the deaths of Hiawatha's wife and two of his three daughters, uses his evil magic to have the people trample the only surviving daughter to death. Grief stricken, Hiawatha wanders into the wilderness, coming eventually to a lake that he causes the ducks to drain. In the bed of the lake, he finds many colored shells, which he strings in patterns and calls wampum. He travels on until he comes to the cabin of Dekanawida, another Iroquois hero, who offers him hospitality. Hiawatha



Illustration of Hiawatha and Minnehaha.
(Ken Welsh/The Bridgeman Art Library International)

tells his host his tale of woe and of the madness of Atatarho, and Dekanawida calls the chiefs together and tells them the situation. The chiefs decide to go to Atatarho's home with wampum to heal his sickness. Hiawatha shows them his colored wampum, which they immediately adopt, as it is more beautiful and powerful than the common shells they have been using. They decide that the wampum will always be used in their councils and that it will endure for all time.

Two spies are then sent to Atatarho's place. These men transform into crows and fly over the forest until they spot the rising smoke of Atatarho's lodge. They enter the lodge and find Atatarho with serpents for hair, turtle claws for hands, and feet like bear's claws. Hastily, the two spies retreat from the appalling sight and hurry back to the chiefs. They report that Atatarho is a demon, no longer human. The chiefs then travel to Atatarho's house, singing the Six Sacred Songs along the way. When they arrive, they invite the local chiefs to come to their fire, explaining their purpose in coming. Then the newcomers begin singing the Six Sacred Songs again. When they finish, they go to Atatarho's lodge to heal him, but when they enter they are as horrified as the spies were. But Dekanawida reminds them that they are chiefs and that they should continue singing and open their wampum. The horrific wizard responds positively to the singing, and Dekanawida is able to sing three more songs to him and to give him a string of wampum. By these means the chiefs heal Atatarho's mind, body, and spirit and make him a natural man again, and he becomes a good leader of his people, ultimately through Hiawatha's discovery of the powerful wampum.

Graham Seal

American Indian oral narratives are concerned, the two most influential ethno-poetic approaches have been the "verse analysis" of Dell Hymes and the "pause phrasing" of Dennis Tedlock. Though both approaches begin with the assumption that oral narration can better be represented on the printed page as poetry than as prose, they differ in the kinds of source material they use and in their perception of what constitutes the aesthetic essence of verbal art.

Using verse analysis, Hymes has effectively shown how the many indigenous-language texts punctiliously documented by BAE researchers and Boasian anthropologists using the aesthetically inhospitable dictation technique nevertheless retain elements of the original artistry that can be recovered by careful linguistic investigation. Hymes's approach suggests that tales printed as prose in original-language texts can be recast in poetic lines by noting the recurrence of grammatical markers such as particles. Lines then can be organized into verses and stanzas using such cues as the pattern number of the culture from which the stories come (three or five in most of the Northwest Coast groups whose oral literature Hymes has studied). These, then, form scenes and acts to result in final products structured as dramatic poetry. Since verse analysis often works with previously recorded material and frequently has only written versions of the words used in the performances, it cannot represent the totality of oral performance, including

paralinguistic and kinesic devices used by the storytellers. But it does, according to its advocates, allow some of the verbal art to emerge out of material whose provenance did not encourage art.

While verse analysis seems to suggest that the art of storytelling can transcend the particulars of a performance situation, pause phrasing situates that art precisely in those particulars. Developed by Dennis Tedlock as he worked with storytellers from Zuñi Pueblo in the 1960s, this approach to representing orally expressed verbal art in print relies upon tape recordings of specific performances. The verbal component of these performances is cast in lines based upon pauses made by the narrator, many of which correspond to the same kinds of grammatical markers that verse analysis uses to define lines. Since Tedlock worked with tape recordings, he was also able to reflect paralinguistic features such as changes in volume, tempo, and vocal quality. These he represented with typographic manipulation to produce what he called “scores,” which a reader might articulate aloud to recreate something very similar to what might be heard on the tape recording of the story. Pause phrasing thus captures many of the precise details of a specific telling of a story, and many of those details would change each time the story was told.

While these two approaches to presenting Native American tales in print have become prominent among serious students of those tales, some translators have continued to opt for prose, though they are likely to take care to meet the goals of ethnopoetics more scrupulously than did their predecessors. Popular presentations of Native American tales, however, often continue to represent the stories using an esthetic that reflects the influence more of Euro-American printed literature than of American Indian oral literature.

Interpretations

Just as there have been a variety of ways to represent Native American tales in print throughout the history of European and Euro-American interest in them, a number of approaches to analyzing and understanding them have also emerged. As early as the seventeenth century, commentators viewed oral literature as a source of data about other aspects of Native American cultures. Stories were cited as reflections of a generalized American Indian worldview or of the specific mindset of a particular group. For example, the Jesuits in New France as well as later missionaries in other parts of North America cited the stories they heard as evidence of the benighted perspective of Indians and, more positively, as evidence of a collective intelligence that could be receptive to the tenets of Christianity. Lewis Cass, who represented the U.S. federal government to Indians in the Old Northwest during the early nineteenth century, encouraged his agents—one of whom was Schoolcraft—to gather information on oral literature for what it could tell them about how to manage their charges most effectively. Using tales as an information source was an important data-gathering technique

among anthropologists in the late nineteenth century. Franz Boas and his students systematically collected stories not only as sources for language information but for the general cultural data they might preserve. In many cases—particularly on the Northwest Coast and later in California—Boasians might collect stories from the few remaining speakers of a language whose cultural base had been supplanted. They would then attempt to reconstruct that culture using descriptions of kinship organization, marriage practices, rituals, and material culture preserved in the stories. Arguing that folklore in general and tales in particular “mirror” culture, some anthropologists continue to view the primary significance of oral literature in what it can reveal about a society’s way of life.

A predominant approach to studying folktales in Europe during the first half of the twentieth century, the historic-geographic method did not enjoy similar popularity among students of American Indian tales. However, the American folklorist Stith Thompson used a Native American narrative, “The Star Husband Tale,” to demonstrate how this method might be applied in “laboratory” conditions. The purpose of the historic-geographic method was to trace tales to their time and point of origin, to define routes of diffusion from that point, to reconstruct the original form of the story, and to identify subtypes that may have developed. European storytelling traditions had, according to critics of the method, been corrupted by printed versions of tales, which might nullify attempts to delineate the processes of oral transmission over time and space.

Thompson suggested that looking at an American Indian story would pose no such problem. What Thompson defined as the original form of “The Star Husband Tale” has two young women wishing to marry stars. Each has her wish granted and finds herself in the “upper world.” They are warned against digging there but disobey and make a hole in the sky. They can see their earthly home below and long to return there. They successfully return home using a long rope. Thompson worked with eighty-six versions of this story that he located, for the most part, in academic and museum publications. An examination of these yielded what he took to be the story’s original form, which he believed to have originated in the Central Plains. He was not at all successful in dating the tale’s origin, though he noted that the earliest publications of the original form occurred in the 1890s. Thompson also identified two subtypes of the story—one involving a porcupine that the young women follow into the upper world, and the other having the young women dependent on a series of animal trickster figures when they become trapped in a tree-top upon their return to earth. While he was able to plot the original form and the subtypes on maps, he could not clearly define routes of diffusion.

The use of tales for ethnographic information and the historic-geographic method came under criticism because both ignored the stories as verbal art. Other attempts to understand American Indian storytelling have often been just as unsuccessful in revealing their artistry. For example, the morphological approach

that Alan Dundes borrowed from Russian folklorist Vladimir Propp to study Native American tales did effectively counter critics of those stories, who believed them to be formless, episodic hodgepodes. For example, Dundes noted a movement from the lack of something desirable to a liquidation of that lack as a recurrent formula. Another frequent pattern has a tale's protagonist being given a warning, his or her not heeding that warning, and the consequences of such irresponsibility. A range of motifs might flesh out these formulaic outlines, which Dundes perceived as transcending cultural and linguistic boundaries. Few analysts followed up on Dundes's preliminary work, though, and he himself did not go beyond identifying formulaic patterns to examining how those patterns were realized in actual story performances. More influential has been the work of French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, who brought his investigations into the fundamental structures of human thought processes to bear on Native American tales. Lévi-Strauss has repeatedly identified a structural mediation of binary opposition underlying narratives from throughout the Americas, including the origin account from Zuñi Pueblo and a number of stories recorded from narrators on the Northwest Coast. Pursuing psychological approaches, analysts have also used the theories and methods of depth psychology to interpret the significance of American Indian tales. The work of Sigmund Freud has informed readings of Mescalero Apache narratives and Mohave Coyote tales, while Carl Gustav Jung has often been invoked to explain such material as the cycle of stories about the Winnebago trickster.

Literary Redactions

Retellings of Native American oral narratives have been a staple of children's literature since the nineteenth century. Many of the period's anthropologists and other students of indigenous cultures believed they were examining people whose way of life represented an immature stage of development—maturity being represented by European and Euro-American civilization. Since Native Americans were considered childlike, it seemed reasonable that their stories were suitable for children, though only after objectionable scatological and sexual elements had been expurgated. Consequently, children's magazines such as *St. Nicholas* often included American Indian stories retold for young readers. Some early Native American writers, such as the Santee physician Charles Alexander Eastman, explored the potential of marketing their culture's narrative traditions for an audience familiar with European fairy tales. *Smokey Day's Wigwam Evenings* (1909), which Eastman prepared in collaboration with his wife Elaine Goodale Eastman, exemplifies this trend, as do some of the collections published by Zitkala-Sa (Gertrude Bonnin), a Yankton. The practice of retelling Native American tales for children has continued with work by the writer-illustrator Paul Goble providing particularly attractive examples. Contemporary Native American writers such as

Ojibwe novelist and poet Louise Erdrich have also written children's books based upon oral narrative traditions.

Erdrich is only one of several modern Native American writers who perceive their work as continuing the traditional storytelling practices of their communities. Some, such as N. Scott Momaday, have used those practices as a way of exploring their cultural identity. His book *The Way to Rainy Mountain* (1969) recounts a multidimensional pilgrimage that he made in search of his identity following the death of his Kiowa grandmother. In addition to physically retracing the route that his ancestors followed as they migrated from the Plateau of western Montana to the Southern Plains, Momaday uses the stories told by his grandmother and other raconteurs as a way of discovering that identity. In presenting these stories, he also ensures that they will endure more securely and reach a wider audience than would be the case had they depended entirely on oral transmission.

Meanwhile, Leslie Marmon Silko from Laguna Pueblo in New Mexico has emphasized her identity as storyteller in the tradition of her female ancestors and relatives and has stressed the continuing significance of traditional narrative motifs and patterns in contemporary life. Her novel *Ceremony* (1977), for example, depicts a Laguna World War II veteran who can reintegrate into his community only by following the patterns of traditional story. Silko has also updated such figures as the Coyote Trickster, showing how the techniques and values that he represents are more than appropriate for survival in the twentieth century. The continuing valence of Trickster provides a dominant theme in the fiction and culture commentary of Ojibwe novelist and scholar Gerald Vizenor, who insists that "tricksterism" provides the only method by which American Indians can survive in the modern era.

Meanwhile, a number of recent anthologies of Native American tales have helped to make this material accessible to the general public. Some of these are essentially collections of rewritten materials, but others include texts that attempt to represent original performances faithfully. Perhaps the best-known recent anthology is Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz's *American Indian Myths and Legends* (1984). However, while some of the material in the volume was collected from storytellers by the authors themselves, much of it comes from previously published sources that the editors have rewritten without returning to original-language texts. More successful are several anthologies edited by Brian Swann, especially *Coming to Light* (1994) and *Voices from Four Directions* (2004), both subtitled *Contemporary Translations of the Native Literatures of North America*. These volumes include texts translated (or retranslated) from either oral performances or earlier published versions that use the principles of ethnopoetics to capture both the original storytelling aesthetic and to represent some of the features of oral performance. Moreover, each example is accompanied by a thorough introduction that provides the reader with essential information about

the cultural context. These anthologies have been faulted for not including Native-language texts, an absence that Swann himself has lamented. But thriving programs for publishing such texts have emerged in several Native American communities, especially in Alaska and on the Northwest Coast. Concurrently, storytellers have begun using English in their performances, so that even in situations where the original language may not be available, the storytelling tradition flourishes.

Since the beginnings of Euro-American interest in American Indian narrative traditions, two perceptions have colored collection, publication, and analysis. One of these is the commonplace belief that oral literature and storytelling are bound to disappear under the influence of literacy and the mass media. While this idea has been a motivation for collecting and studying oral literature in a range of contexts since the inception of such scholarship, the Native American situation has also been affected by the trope of the “vanishing American,” central to views of Indian life since colonial days and a principal influence on government policies regarding Indians. The assumption has been that “primitive” Indian cultures will inevitably give way to the advance of Western civilization. Native American tales, hence, have been affected not only by the threat of literacy but by the demise of their cultural matrices. The late twentieth-century revival of interest in Native American verbal art, termed the “Native American Renaissance” by critic Kenneth Lincoln, indicates that concerns about the survival of Indian cultures and their literatures either were unfounded or contributed to attempts by scholars and by communities to ensure that they did not disappear. In the twenty-first century, narrative and other verbal art traditions of Native Americans continue to thrive both orally and as an influence on written literature.

William M. Clements

See Also American Indian Folklore Scholarship; Folktale; Performance.

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Anansi

Spider trickster of West and Central Africa and of the African diaspora in the Caribbean, northern South America, and the United States of America. Anansi (also spelled Ananse, Anancy, or Nansi) goes by numerous localized names, including “Ti Malice” in Haiti, “Boy Nasty” or “B’Rabby” in the Bahamas, “Nancy” in Curacao, and “Aunt Nancy” or “Miss Nancy” along the Carolina and Georgia coasts. Wherever he is found, Anansi is a cunning trickster, making full use of his insect abilities, such as eight feet and a sticky web, along with his magical powers to attain his usually greedy, self-centered ends. Anansi is able to transform into a hare, a fox, or even a human and is usually thought to be the origin of Brer Rabbit, as popularized by Joel Chandler Harris in his Uncle Remus stories from 1880. Like many trickster figures, Anansi is amoral, duplicitous, and greedy and is sometimes shown being outwitted by other animals, or even by humans.

Among the most frequently encountered Anansi tales are those that tell of his tricking Tiger into letting him ride on his back and of how Anansi stole the sun. Also typical of Anansi tales are those that show him being bested, as in the story of the farmer who, fed up with Anansi’s thieving of his property, places a tar or gum baby in his field. When Anansi comes to the field, he greets the tar baby and, receiving no response, slaps the sticky figure with his hand, which immediately sticks to the doll. Anansi tries to kick the tar baby with the same result. The farmer arrives, finds Anansi struggling to escape the tar baby, and, gleefully, beats Anansi flat, thus explaining how spiders came to be such flattened-out creatures.

As well as explanatory legends of this kind, trickster tales often point to a moral, a characteristic well illustrated by a Jamaican Anansi story in which the trickster is living in a country where the queen is also a witch. Her secret name is

the word *five*, and she decrees that anyone who speaks the word will die on the spot. Scheming Anansi, known as “Buh Anansi” in Jamaica, is hungry because there is a famine. He has an idea. He decides to build a house on the river where people come to get their water, and he makes a pile of yam hills. Whenever anyone comes for water, he calls out to them, saying that he cannot count and so will they help him out by counting the yam hills. They count “one, two, three, four, five” and, according to the witch-queen’s curse, drop dead. Then Anansi plans to preserve all the bodies so he will have plenty to eat, whether there is a famine or not. A guinea fowl comes down to the river, and Anansi calls out for her to count how many yam hills he has. The guinea fowl sits on one of the yam hills and counts: “one, two, three, four, and the one I’m standing on.” “No,” Anansi says, thwarted, “you can’t count.” So the guinea fowl moves to another yam hill and counts again the same way. “You don’t count right at all,” says the frustrated Anansi. “How do you count then?” asks the guinea fowl. Like this, replies Anansi: “one, two, three, four, five.” At the last word, he drops dead, and the guinea fowl eats him up. The moral of the story is: “being greedy chokes the puppy.”

Among the Ashanti and related Akan peoples of Africa, Anansi the spider, often called “Uncle Anansi,” is a major figure, appearing in many tales. These tales often portray him as a fool trying, usually without much success, to outwit animals, humans, and even the gods. Although sometimes shown as wise, Anansi is also greedy, cunning, and ruthless, though his occasional victories over bullies are often used as moral examples. As well as these cultural roles, Anansi may take on the functions of a creator hero in Ashanti and Akanese tradition, where he is credited with the creation of the moon and the founding of customary and other traditional activities. Less positively, he is also blamed for bringing debt and greed into the world.

Significantly, Anansi is also said to own all the tales ever told, as recounted in an Ashanti legend in which Anansi displays some of his most heroic and cunning traits. In the beginning, all stories were owned by the sky-god Nyame, but Anansi wants them and so asks the god if he will sell them to him. The price Nyame demands is that Anansi bring him the hornets (Mmoboro), the great python (Onini), and the leopard (Osebo). Using his skill, cunning, and bravery, Anansi captures all three and delivers them to Nyame, who, astonished at Anansi’s success where great warriors had tried and failed, decrees that from then on all stories shall belong to Anansi the spider.

Anansi also features in West African proverbs that reflect well his ambivalent importance, including: “Woe to him who would put his trust in Anansi—a sly, selfish, and greedy fellow”; and “The wisdom of the spider is greater than that of all the world put together.” Anansi and his doings have been the raw material of much children’s fiction and of numerous popular folktale anthologies.

Graham Seal

See Also African Folklore; African American Folklore; Animal Tale; Trickster.

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Anecdote

Narratives that concentrate on representative incidents regarding named individuals or groups. As the etymology of this term indicates (Latin *anecdota*, “unpublished items,” from the Greek *anekdotos*, “unpublished”), anecdotes have always been closely associated with oral tradition. They share their particular folk-narrative niche with closely related genres such as joke, legend, exemplum, rumor, tall tale (see related entries), and the kind of humorous story that in German is called *schwank*. Several traits, therefore, tend to overlap among these genres, and it is not always easy to separate one from the other.

What is peculiar to the anecdote, though not exclusively so, is its concentration on named individuals or groups, especially the former. Consequently, anonymity is not one of its chief properties. Anecdotes focus particularly on well-known historical or contemporary personalities, both those in the public eye in general (royalty, famous military figures, politicians, scientists, film stars, athletes, writers) and those locally regarded as “worthies.” Whether anecdotes told about these individuals are intended to enhance or to denigrate them, the anecdotes relate incidents seen as typical of the individuals’ actions or other qualities. In performance, an anecdote is often used to underpin or confirm in its pointedness a characteristic previously

ascribed to an individual (“To show you what I mean, let me tell you a story I heard about so-and- so”). Whether they are believed to be true or known to be apocryphal, anecdotes can be powerful rhetorical tools thinly disguised as narrative entertainment. Mutatis mutandis, these hallmarks also apply to anecdotes told about distinguishable, named groups, whether in praise (soldiers of a particular regiment, a famous clan, Londoners during World War II) or in mocking contempt (the East Frisians, the Irish, the people of Aarhus, the men of Gotham, city officials).

Although allegedly relating the actions or sayings of named individuals, anecdotes essentially express general human traits or universal human concerns, such as stupidity, cleverness, boastfulness, curiosity, cowardice, miserliness, laziness, drunkenness, gaucheness, ignorance, credulity, absentmindedness, shrewdness, courage, quick-wittedness, slow-wittedness, and so on. The diplomatic gaffe of an ambassador representing a powerful country or the simple mistake made in a foreign language by a prominent politician not only creates a certain amount of *schadenfreude* and exposes the imperfections of those in high places but also, in some representative fashion, compensates for our own occasional lack of tact or behavioral competence and our own linguistic struggles when abroad. Thus, anecdotes are convenient vehicles for overt or covert social criticism. Drunkenness may itself be deplored or lead to hilarious narrative accounts—the story of a drunken priest highlights the incongruity of the condition and the status of the person afflicted. Courage may be admired in the strong, but it gains much poignancy when displayed by the timid in adversity. Group rivalry between sports teams, neighboring cities, universities, fraternities, the different armed services, ethnic communities, religious persuasions, and so on may find otherwise elusive expression in the short, sharply focused narrative of the anecdote.

Structurally, anecdotes, like jokes and contemporary legends, rely heavily on and therefore work toward a final revelation or punch line. But unlike the other two genres, they do not lose their effectiveness in repetition; quite the contrary, those who tell anecdotes are often asked to repeat them to reinforce a particular view or opinion of an individual or group in an entertaining manner. Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson’s *The Types of the Folktale* lists many of the traditional anecdotes in section 1200–1999 (“Jokes and Anecdotes”), together with other monoepisodic stories. The majority of motifs are likely to be found under J (“The Wise and the Foolish”), K (“Deceptions”), W (“Traits of Character”), and X (“Humor”) in Stith Thompson’s *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*. Despite the popularity of the anecdote in oral tradition, folklorists have paid comparatively little attention to the anecdote as a genre per se. Not surprisingly, the anecdote, with its strong affinity to the short story, also has become a well-honed literary genre.

W. F. H. Nicolaisen

See Also Esoteric/Exoteric Factor; Ethnic Folklore; Folktale.

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Animals

Living creatures that are a major source and subject of—as well as co-participants in—human created folklore. Our stories feature animal characters. Our folk arts use their fur, feathers, skin, and bones. We eat them in our foodways. We emulate and relate to them in fashioning folk groups. Animals participate with us



The ugly duckling in the old woman's house, illustrated by Maginel Wright Enright. (Tweed, Anna, ed. *Fairy Tales Everyone Should Know*, 1920)

in the traditional activities of hunting and domestic life and many varieties of our pets, working animals, and livestock are “living folk art” products of vernacular processes that in turn contribute to human folkways.

Fantastic animal stories have long been a recognized major tale type. Many societies’ mythologies depict archetypal animals acting in human or god-like ways such as the trickster figures Coyote in Native American lore, Brer Rabbit and Brer Fox among African Americans, and Anansi the Spider in the Caribbean and West Africa. Stith Thompson’s seminal reference work *The Types of the Folktale* begins with an “Animal Tales” section (Thompson 1995).

Sometimes animals are an occupational or avocational interest around which folk groups organize themselves—cattle for cowboys (Stanley and Thatcher 2000), chickens for cockfighting (Dundes 1994), and foxes and hounds for foxhunting (Hufford 1992, Eliason 2004). Animals also shape identity as totems in tribal societies, such as bears among the Ainu of Northern Japan, or modern American sports teams such as baseball’s Arizona Diamondbacks or football’s St. Louis Rams.

The animals we will or will not keep as pets, or will or will not eat, and how we treat them become boundary markers for religious, ethnic, national, regional, and social groups. Religious dietary laws often prohibit the consumption of certain animals and demand the sacrifice of others. Among Muslims, it is said Mohammed once cut off the corner of his coat when he got up so as not to disturb a sleeping cat, but taught that angels will not enter a house that keeps a dog. Wealthy Arab keepers of graceful saluki hunting dogs often maintain that their noble animals are different than the semi-feral mutts exiled to the outskirts of town by the pious who tend to be “cat people.”

Devout Muslims demand that food animals be killed by slicing open the jugular vein and carotid artery in one motion without damaging the spinal cord in part because they deem this more humane. Inversely, some animal rights activists condemn *dhabihah* slaughter because they find it inhumane. In the Philippines, many see cockfighting as the national sport embodying virtues of courage and persistence, while in Western Europe and the United States it is regarded as cruel and is banned.

A 1998 city ordinance pushed by cosmopolitan Manilans bans the slaughter of dogs for food. Other Filipinos ignore the law, seeing no need to kowtow to Western sensibilities and abandon traditional foodways. While the countries out of which animal rights activism flows often make a sharp moral distinction between pet-type animals and food-type animals, Filipinos see dogs as appropriate for both. People know puppies considered as pets should wear a collar or be considered fair game.

Iguanas are common to both the islands of Saba and Aruba in the Dutch Caribbean. While Sabans would recoil from eating one, Arubans barbecue iguana on the beach in self-conscious displays of island identity. Similarly, Ghanaians consider Nigerians barbaric for eating the bones of their fried chicken, while Nigerians consider Ghanaians foolish for passing up the nutrients.

In the United States, ball pythons are bred as pets to an increasingly numerous variety of rare and expensive “morphs” or distinctive color patterns desired by collectors who are as likely to be teenage girls as tattooed bikers. In Turkey, snakes are more often considered wild animals inappropriate for pets, whereas keeping turtles enjoys a strong cultural cache reinforced by Turkey’s most famous and most reproduced painting, *The Turtle Trainer* by Osman Hamdi Bey that depicts what was a common pursuit in the court of Ottoman Sultans (Pamucak 2005). All of these distinctions are traditional and passed on as identity-defining attitudes through the generations.

While folklorists have regarded animals as subject matter for lore or as significant identifiers for folk groups, animals’ own forms and behaviors in and of themselves have not yet been widely understood as folklore. Nevertheless, animals themselves can be the products of, and participants in, folkloric processes. In traditional hunting and agricultural settings as well as suburban accessories, animals are at the same time living folk art fashioned by humans but also active tradition bearers, cultural creators, and competent performers who in turn shape humans’ traditional activities.

The many breeds of dogs, whose diverse shapes are the legacy of former, and sometimes continuing, traditional working and sporting uses, can be seen as folklore genres expressed according to vernacular knowledge, passed on through generations, and shaped from natural organic materials just as handmade baskets are from reeds or carved saddles are from leather. With dog breeds, the organic medium craftsmen work in is still alive. They are not *artifacts*, but rather *biofacts* as would be any living things shaped by, and emergent from, traditional human creative activity.

Not only as lore *products* but as lore *producers*, working animals pass on occupational knowledge to apprentices. In foxhunting, hounds will wear a coupling collar so the younger can follow the elder’s lead. In Great Plains coyote coursing younger dogs informally learn from older ones how to cross a barbed wire fence without getting cut. Stephen Budiansky suggests that the etiological legends explaining domestication common in many societies—where man goes into the wild, captures a wolf cub and tames it—give far too much credit to conscious human dominion in domestication’s long evolutionary processes (Budiansky 1999, 19–21). Rather, animals such as dogs, cows, cats, and chickens—generalists all, adept at exploiting the changing habitats humans tend to create—have infiltrated themselves into human society as a highly successful survival strategy as evidenced by the numerical success of domestic animals compared to their much-dwindled wild counterparts (Budiansky 2000, 6) as well as the extraordinary lengths human pastoralists like the Maasai will take to follow and protect cattle on what are more or less the herd’s natural cyclical migration paths or the fact that there are more pet dogs than human children in San Francisco (Sappenfield 2002).

Perhaps our lives are as much the creation of animal preferences as the other way around.

In the wild, it is becoming clear that some animals understand and use aesthetic principles and can respond to beauty and craftsmanship much the same way humans do even with no human involvement. The male bowerbird of New Guinea constructs an elaborate house made from a wide variety of materials that have to be arranged just so. These bowers do not protect the male from predators or the elements or serve any immediately clear survival purpose. However, when a female bowerbird inspects the bower and any detail doesn't meet her fancy or displeases her in any way, she rejects the male as a mate (Hansell 2007, 216–251).

In recent decades, ethologists have chipped away at the list of things once thought to distinguish humans from animals—namely, tool use (Goodall 1986), fashioned weapon use (Pruetz 2007), tradition, custom, language (Hillix and Rumbaugh 2003, Slobodchikoff 2002, Pepperberg 2002), kinship understandings, psychological awareness (Griffin 1976) and emotions (Ridley 1993, 312, 326; Masson and McCarthy 1996) as well as art (Gould and Gould 2007, Hansell 2005) and the appreciation of beauty (Hansell 2007). This list shows remarkable overlap with the very purview folklorists have claimed, but so far, folklorists have mostly looked at such phenomena only in human societies.

Eric Eliason

See Also Animal Tale; Belief, Folk; Foodways.

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Animal Tale

A fictional oral narrative in which animals perform the principal plot actions. As a folklore genre, animal tales are distinct from the closely related genres of mimologisms and etiological legends. Mimologisms are verbal expressions and dialogues, sometimes introduced by a very short narrative, that interpret the sounds of animals in humorous ways. Etiological legends relate events, supposed to have taken place once in the distant past, to explain particularities of the animal and natural world still observable nowadays—for example, to tell why the bat is blind and flies only at night (AT 222A, a version of which appears as the twenty-third tale in the *Fables* of Marie de France), or to explain why the bear has no tail (AT 2, "The Tail-Fisher").

In certain cases, animal tales so closely resemble etiological legends that they share the same plot, although the two genres put that plot to different uses. Medieval versions of "The Tail-Fisher," for example, pit the fox against the wolf: the fox convinces the wolf to use his tail as a fishing line. As the wolf sits on a hole

in a frozen pond, waiting for the fish to bite, ice forms around his tail and traps him. Farmers arrive and beat the wolf; in order to survive, he has to cut off his own tail. The version just summarized comes from the medieval *Roman de Renart*, a twelfth-century collection of fictional tales. But in some modern oral traditions, the tale is told about a bear, and after the bear loses his tail in the ice, the narrator ends by explaining that this is why, today, bears have no tails.

Like “The Tail-Fisher,” most animal tales feature two major characters. And, also like “The Tail-Fisher,” most are simply structured stories of deceit involving two basic plot actions. First, there is the deceit or deception (the fox tricks the wolf into using his tail as a fishing line); second, the outcome, a sudden ending (the wolf is beaten and loses his tail). In the actual practice of storytelling, however, a narrator may string together many such short tales into long narratives. Because the episodes are all similar in structure, they may occur in any order, thus allowing gifted performers great freedom to compose their own chains of episodes. Nevertheless, some chains have proved remarkably stable in practice. For example, in both medieval literature and in recent oral tradition, “The Tail-Fisher” is often prefaced by “The Theft of Fish” (AT 1), in which a hungry fox plays dead; fishermen find him in the road and, eager to skin him, throw him into their fish basket (or in the *Roman de Renart*, a cart full of eels); as the fishermen make their way home, the fox throws the fish out of the basket and then escapes to eat them.

The animal tales of oral folk tradition are organized around a few clear semantic oppositions: physical weakness combined with cunning conflicts with physical strength combined with stupidity. Wild animals conflict with domestic animals. These two sets of oppositions generally coincide, as both stupidity and savagery are stigmatized while cunning and domesticity are valorized. In European tradition, strength and stupidity are most often embodied in the figure of the wolf, though in the Nordic countries the bear frequently fills this role. The trickster par excellence is the fox, but his status is more ambiguous. When opposed to domestic animals, he represents physical strength and is sometimes the loser, but when opposed to the wolf or bear, he is the embodiment of cunning, thus acquiring some of the traits normally attached to the human/domestic sphere.

In medieval literature, animal tales were told for moral and edifying purposes, in fables and exempla; for didactic purposes, in bestiaries; but above all, for comic and satiric purposes, in the vast cycle of Reynard the Fox—the immensely popular and influential *Roman de Renart* (1174–1250), its antecedents in clerical Latin poetry, and its many continuations into the fifteenth century.

Fable and Exemplum Traditions

The oldest literary versions of animal tales in Western tradition are the medieval collection of fables called *ysopets* or *Romulus*, which transmit and adapt the fables of classical antiquity (Aesop and Phaedrus) throughout the Middle Ages.

Generally speaking, the fable, of learned origin and cultivated by clerics, is written to convey a moral message; the animal tales of oral folk tradition, on the contrary, tend to be told for entertainment. This difference affects their respective narrative structures. For example, fables tend to end with a pointed moral, whereas animal tales seldom do.

Although medieval fables ultimately derive from the antique fables of Aesop and Phaedrus, a number of them are retellings of animal tales from folk traditions. Compilers of fable collections used a variety of sources. A case in point is the *Fables* of Marie de France, possibly the first such collection to appear in a European vernacular. It includes twenty stories derived from classical fable tradition as well some twelve fabliaux, but the remainder are animal tales rooted in medieval oral folk traditions. Three of the folk-derived fables feature the fox: “The Cock and the Fox” (AT 6), “The Fox and the Dove” (AT 62), and “The Fox and the Bear” (AT 36). Significantly, all three tales also appear in the major beast epic collections *Ysengrimus* and *Renart*. Eight others commonly associated with folk tradition feature the wolf. In contrast to the fox tales, the wolf tales seem to have come more immediately from clerical sources. In these tales, animals fast, officiate at mass, and serve as bishops! One of Marie’s wolf fables (no. 90) follows the plot of the popular tale of “The Wolf and the Seven Kids” (AT 123).

After 1250, medieval fables featuring the fox and the wolf are likely to borrow from the widely popular *Roman de Renart* rather than directly from folk tradition. For example, the *Liber parabolarum* (Book of Parables) by Odo de Cheriton contains 116 fables, of which 15 can be traced back to classical tradition through the *Romulus* and others to bestiaries, while several are connected with the cycle of Reynard the Fox. For example, Odo’s fable 74 is the tale of “The Tail-Fisher” (AT 2). Fable 23, “De fraudibus vulpis et catti” (On the Tricks of the Wolf and the Cat), is a folktale: the cat’s only trick saves him. When in danger, the cat climbs up the tree, whereas the fox is captured in spite of his many tricks (AT 105, “The Cat’s Only Trick”). The protagonists of this fable are given the names—Reynard the Fox and Tibert the Cat—earlier bestowed upon them in the *Roman de Renart*, although the story itself does not appear in the *Roman*. Fables by Jean de Sheppey (between 1354 and 1377) include such narratives as “Lupus et vulpes in lardio” (The Wolf and the Fox in the Larder), a version of the popular animal tale “The Wolf Overeats in the Cellar” (AT 41, also found in the fables of Odo of Cheriton).

Preachers often employed animal tales in their sermons, first exploiting the entertaining features of the folktale to gain the attention of the audience and then shaping the tale to underscore moral points. Such tales, known as *exempla*, became increasingly popular in the later Middle Ages. The French exemplum collection *Chastoiement d’un père à son fils* (A Father’s Warning to His Son) includes the tale of the wolf and fox in the well (AT 32). The *Chastoiement* is a

Aesop

Aesop has been known since the fifth century BCE as the Greek author of the world's best-known fables. However, most modern scholars doubt that he existed as a real person, maintaining instead that already in antiquity the name Aesop was invented to provide authorship for diverse fables from various anonymous sources. Supporting this theory, many of the earliest references to the stories of Aesop refer to *Aesopic* (or *Aesopian*) fables rather than Aesop's fables. Thus, the adjective *Aesopic* describes a kind of tale and a storytelling tradition but does not identify a specific author.

The most frequently cited ancient reference to the man Aesop is found in the *History* of the Greco-Persian Wars by the Greek historian Herodotus (ca. 425 BCE). Here we learn little more than that Aesop lived during the sixth century BCE, was the slave of a Samian, and was murdered. There are also a number of medieval manuscripts that depict the life of Aesop, but they often contradict each other, and many of the events they describe are so fantastic as to be unbelievable by modern standards. According to these accounts, Aesop was born a dark-skinned slave or possibly captured into slavery at a young age. He is reputed to have been ugly and deformed. Furthermore, in his early years he suffered from a speech impediment, but he was miraculously cured and became an eloquent orator. His quick tongue and sharp wit often got him into trouble, for he had a sarcastic response for every occasion, and he was an unrepentant trickster. With time, Aesop's cunning, wisdom, and oratory skills brought him freedom from slavery, but in the end they cost him



Woodcut showing Aesop surrounded by symbols of fables, 1481. (Library of Congress)

his life. The citizens of Delphi were so offended by his lack of respect for their aristocracy and for their principal deity, Apollo, that they planted a golden cup in his baggage, accused him of temple theft, and executed him by throwing him over a cliff.

The lack of surviving written records makes it impossible to establish an authoritative canon of stories attributable to Aesop. The oldest extant collection of Aesopic fables, containing some 94 tales, was recorded in Latin verse by Phaedrus during the first century CE. It was based on earlier manuscripts, now lost. The oldest surviving collection of Aesopic fables in Greek was authored in the second century CE by Babrius, a Hellenized Roman. This collection included more than 200 fables, 143 of which are still extant in their original verse form, with an additional 57 having survived in prose paraphrases. Many collections of 'Aesop's fables' compiled in the Middle Ages were based on the versions of Phaedrus and Babrius.

Aesopic fables were highly valued as teaching tools in medieval and Renaissance Europe. The development of movable-type printing, beginning about 1455, greatly facilitated the publication of fable collections. In fact, various compilations of 'Aesop's fables' were among the first books published in a number of European vernacular languages, including an English edition published in 1484 by William Caxton.

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translation of the eleventh-century *Disciplina clericalis* by Petrus Alfonsi, a Spanish Christian converted from Judaism. Alfonsi, in turn, had borrowed the tale from the Talmudic commentator Rachi. Through such channels, many Jewish and Arabic tales entered the written traditions and influenced the oral traditions of medieval Europe, especially from the thirteenth century forward, as the Latin tales were translated into European vernaculars.

The Roman de Renart

The animal tales of medieval written tradition are most richly represented by the vast and complex literature centered around the figure of Reynard the Fox.

Questions concerning the relationship between oral folk tradition and the *Roman de Renart*, as well as the *Roman's* sources of inspiration in general, have given rise to violent scholarly disputes. It is now clear that the animal tales written in Latin in poetic form by clerics and monks had a decisive influence. The earliest of these, *Ecbasis captivi* (The Escape of a Captive, written in 937), depicts animals and scenes later found in the *Roman de Renart*. Two centuries later appears *Ysengrimus*, a long satirical poem by the monk Nivard of Ghent (1149) and a direct precursor of *Renart*. *Ysengrimus* portrays the exploits of the fox Reinardus and his sustained feud with the wolf Ysengrimus; this is the earliest work in which animals are given personal names. In content and structure, *Ysengrimus* displays strong similarities with the later *Renart*. For example, *Ysengrimus* contains a sequence of four episodes that would later appear, in the exact

Exemplum

A short narrative using real or at least realistic events to illustrate a cultural belief. This type of story was recognized as one of the basic devices of rhetorical argument by Aristotle, who termed it *paradiegma* (paradigm). Roman rhetoricians such as Cicero and Quintilian termed such stories *exempla*, a word originally meaning ‘a clearing in the woods.’ The genre was based on historically verifiable incidents but often included frankly fictional narratives that involved animals (fables), comparisons drawn from ordinary life (parables), or realistic stories that were not verifiable but that *could* have happened.

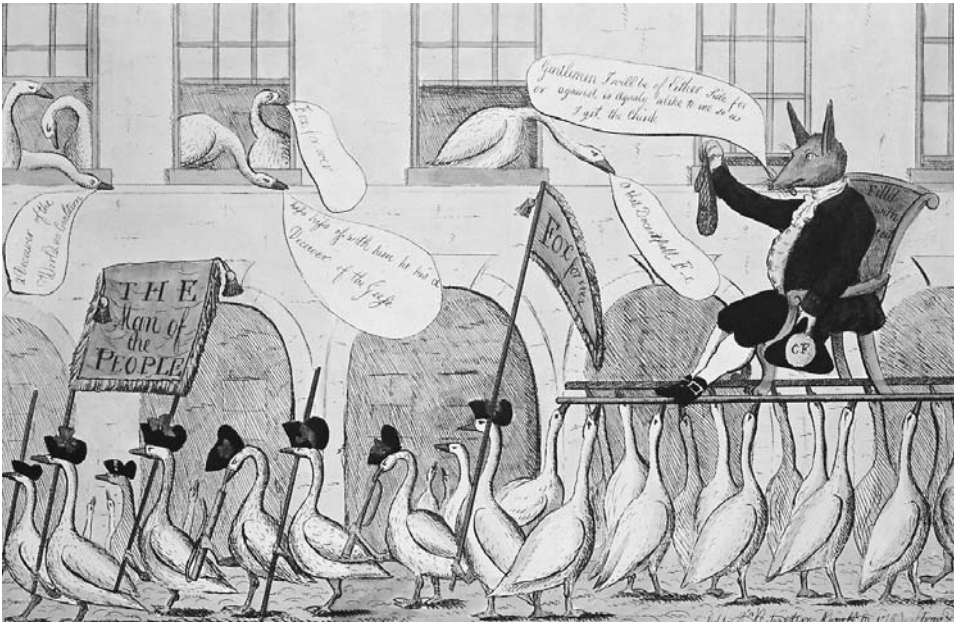
Exempla became an important element in Christian homiletic writing, as preachers used such stories in sermons to lay audiences. As a guide, anthologies of such narratives circulated, beginning in the sixth century with Pope Gregory the Great’s *Homiliae in Evangelia*. Such ‘example-books’ enjoyed their greatest vogue from 1200 to 1400, when they circulated in Latin and many vernacular languages. The *Gesta Romanorum* was one of the most influential of these works in Latin, and several of Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, including the Pardoner’s, Summoner’s, and Monk’s Tales, drew on vernacular versions from this genre.

Originally drawn from classical histories or saints’ lives, these collections eventually included many traditional narratives. Hence, example-books have proven a useful guide to anecdotal oral narratives of the medieval and Renaissance periods. Exempla were used for a wide variety of purposes: Preachers could employ historical figures as good or bad examples to exhort listeners to practice virtue and avoid sin. But many more contemporaneous examples were used to frighten them with the wages of blasphemy.

One such exemplum was ‘The Dancers of Kolbeck,’ about individuals who insisted on dancing and singing outside a church during mass and were punished by being compelled to dance without stop for an entire year. Word of this event, which allegedly occurred in 1012, spread rapidly through Europe as a sermon exemplum, and beggars even carried letters claiming to prove that they had themselves been participants in the event. A number of other horrific events, such as accounts of bleeding hosts, accidental cannibalism, ritual sacrifice, and *penis captivus* (imprisoned penis), also are found in collections of exempla.

As time passed, however, these collections began to emphasize stories intended to amuse rather than scare. Hence, many examples in later collections resemble jokes or fabliaux, illustrating the sexual lapses of monks or priests and their parishioners. However, traditional narratives remain an integral part of folk preaching, and Véronique Campion-Vincent, in fact, has argued that contemporary legends are best understood as the historical descendants of exempla. Indeed, many such legends continue to circulate as sermon illustrations: Televangelist Oral Roberts recently used a version of ‘The Vanishing Hitchhiker’ as an exemplum.

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Hand-colored engraving of *The Re-Electing of Reynard, or Fox the Pride of the Geese*, 1783. (The Bridgeman Art Library International)

same order, in the earliest branch of the Renart cycle (branch II): Renart and the cock, Renart and the titmouse (though the role of titmouse is filled by a cock in *Ysengrimus*), Renart's insult of Isengrin's cubs, and his rape of Isengrin's wife.

These early animal epics in the form of Latin poetry are themselves inspired by Aesopian fables, but they are amply developed and are given an ecclesiastic twist through such features as the wolf dressed as priest, which was a widespread religious topos in the Middle Ages.

Although undeniably influenced by the *Ysengrimus*, the *Roman de Renart* displays some distinctive innovations. Written in the vernacular, it appeals to a much larger audience, more interested in laughter than in philosophical and moral speculations. Plot and characters are no longer confined to monastic life.

Roman de Renart is not a unified work. Rather, it is a cycle of independent poems in the French vernacular, centered around the trickster figure of Reynard the Fox. These poems, called "branches," were composed at different times by different authors, most of them anonymous. Sometimes they relate a single episode, and sometimes a string of episodes. Although they sometimes refer to each other, these poems were meant to be read independently and therefore often overlap or contradict each other. The numerical order of the branches established by Ernest Martin in the 1880s is still used by scholars for practical purposes, although it differs both from the chronology of the events in the narration and from the presumed chronology of their writing.

As early as the thirteenth century copyists tried to assemble the branches into comprehensive collections. Three different collections survive from the Middle Ages, none of which contains all 28 of the branches identified by scholars today. The choice of branches and their order of appearance are also different in the three collections. Furthermore, even the total of 28 branches is misleading because some branches (e.g., V) have been subdivided into subbranches a and b, each of which may be counted as a separate branch. The earliest 6 branches were written between 1174 and 1178, another 12 between 1178 and 1205, and yet another 12 between 1225 and 1250. These three groups total about 25,000 lines.

The earliest six branches (II–Va, III, V, XV, IV, XIV) constitute the sections of the *Roman de Renart* that most strongly parallel the tales of oral folk tradition. In branches II and Va, the oldest poem of the *Roman* (1174–1177), written by a cleric, Pierre de Saint-Cloud, Renart catches the cock Chanticleer by inducing him to crow with his eyes closed; Renart leaps and seizes the cock in his jaws (AT 61). Chanticleer escapes by persuading Renart to talk and taking advantage of the situation to fly out of the fox’s mouth (AT 6). Defeated by the cock, the fox then tries to beguile the titmouse into closing his eyes and kissing him, claiming that King Noble, the lion, has ordered peace among all animals. Suspicious, the titmouse touches Renart with a twig, and the fox snaps at it. The titmouse escapes unharmed (AT 62, “Peace among Animals”). Renart, pretending to make friends with Tibert the cat, proposes that the two run a race; Renart’s plan is to steer Tibert into a trap, a pit dug in the path by a peasant; Tibert sees the pit and swerves just in time, but eventually steers Renart into it (AT 30). Renart flatters Tiecelein the raven into singing. Tiecelein drops his cheese and Renart gets hold of it (AT 57). The poem then turns to the origin of the mortal feud that opposes Renart and Isengrin the wolf. One day Renart finds himself by accident in the wolf’s den, and Hersent, Isengrin’s wife, makes advances to him. Renart embraces her, but fearing the return of Isengrin, he soon leaves, after having stolen her food and insulted her cubs. The cubs reveal their mother’s behavior to their father. Isengrin forces Hersent to help him catch Renart. Renart flees to his den. Isengrin and Hersent pursue him with such speed that Hersent gets trapped, with her head in the den and her hindquarters outside. Renart goes out through another entrance and rapes her, while insulting Isengrin, who is witness to the scene.

In branch III, Renart plays dead on the road. A peasant takes him up and throws him in his wagon, which is full of eels, and Renart throws them one by one out of the wagon (AT 1, “The Theft of Fish”). Isengrin, pursued by dogs, takes refuge in a monastery and puts on monk’s robes. Renart induces him to catch fish with his tail through a hole in the ice. The wolf’s tail freezes fast, and when he is attacked and tries to escape, he loses his tail (AT 2, “The Tail-Fisher”).

In branch V, Renart helps Isengrin steal a ham, but the wolf tricks him and eats it alone. Renart tries in vain to eat the cricket. In branch XV Renart and Tibert

the cat find a sausage. Tibert tricks Renart into letting him carry it, climbs up a cross, and eats the sausage alone. In branch IV (written in 1178), Renart dives in the well of the monastery, mistaking his reflection for his wife Hermeline (AT 34). When Isengrin arrives, Renart pretends that he is in heaven, inducing Isengrin to descend into the well in one bucket, thus bringing Renart up in the other one (AT 32). Branch XIV (written in 1178) features Renart and Tibert in the cellar (AT 41); Renart plays tricks on Primaut, a wolf whose adventures are very similar to those of Isengrin.

After 1178, the poems of the cycle diverge substantially from oral traditional animal tales and take on themes related to professional life and upper-class society. Branch I (1179) is devoted to the trial of Renart, branch VI (1190) to his duel with Isengrin and his becoming a monk, branch XII (1190) to Renart and Tibert in the cloister, branch VIII (1190) to Renart's pilgrimage, and branch Ia (1190–1195) to the siege of Renart's den Maupertuis. In branch Ib (1195), Renart becomes a *jongleur*, in branch VII (1195–1200) Renart confesses, and in branch XI (1196–1200) he becomes emperor. Branch IX (1200) presents Renart, the peasant, and the bear; branch XVI, Renart's will; and branch XVII (1205), Renart's death and burial.

Characters in the *Roman de Renart*, especially in the earlier branches, are described as both humans and animals. Renart is a seigneur who owns a fortified castle, Maupertuis, and a fief, and fights a duel with Isengrin. The society around him is a close reflection of the feudal world of the twelfth century. Yet he has to crawl on four legs through the kitchen garden in order to catch a chicken. The other protagonists, too, have their traditional animal characteristics: Brun the bear is clumsy and greedy; Tibert the cat is agile, fastidious, and hypocritical; Chanticleer the cock is vain and protective; and Bernart the donkey is immensely credulous and silly. This does not apply to the female protagonists, however. Queen Fiere, the lioness, is as noble and beautiful as a queen in an Arthurian romance; Renart's wife Hermeline appears largely in the role of devoted wife and mother; and Isengrin's wife, Hersent, is as sensuous and unfaithful as the wives in fabliaux—but these traits do not reflect the characteristics of their animal species in folk tradition.

From its very beginning, the *Roman de Renart* displays both a comical and a satirical aspect. The balance between these two aspects changes progressively, from the more comical to the more satirical. The earliest branches, closer to folklore, introduce a strong parodic element alongside the simple comedy of traditional animal tales. Writers of the *Roman de Renart* continually parody the scenes and rhetorics of courtly literature, chansons de geste, legal procedures, and other realms of refined aristocratic and ecclesiastical life.

The *Roman de Renart* has had many continuations, new poems that can be considered as new branches in a way, but whose style and purpose infuse the figure

of Renart and his adventures with more and more satire and less overt comedy. The characters also become increasingly anthropomorphic. In *Renart le bestourné* (1261), Rutebeuf delivers a violent attack on friars, as does the anonymous poem *Le couronnement de Renart* (1263–1270). *Renart le nouvel* (1289), by Jacquemart Gielée, is a long allegoric and didactic poem, a prose adaptation often copied and published in the course of the following 300 years. New branches are composed in the fourteenth century. The anonymous *Roman de Renart le contrefait* (1319–1342) is an enormous work of encyclopedic knowledge.

The first six branches of the *Roman de Renart* inspired *Reinhart Fuchs*, written about 1190 in Alsatian, a German dialect, by Heinrich le Glichezâre. A new branch of *Renart* developed in Italy: *Rainardo e Lisengrino*, written in Franco-Italian dialect in the thirteenth century.

English-language versions of the Renart tales are relatively rare before the fifteenth century. The short thirteenth-century poem “The Fox and the Wolf” relates the story of Renart and Isengrin in the well. Renart next appears in the last years of the fourteenth century in Chaucer’s “Nun’s Priest’s Tale,” a free adaptation of the episode of Renart and Chanticleer the cock.

The popularity and diffusion of the *Roman de Renart* has been especially strong in the countries north of France. The Flemish poem *Reinaert de Voës* (ca. 1250), which combines and translates several French branches, inspired a prose adaptation in Dutch (published 1479). The Dutch version was in turn translated into English by Caxton under the title of *History of Raynard the Fox* (1481) and became the source of a number of German and Scandinavian translations and reworkings in subsequent centuries, even serving as the main source of inspiration of Goethe’s *Reinecke Fuchs*.

Numerous allusions in chansons de geste, fabliaux, and other literary works testify that by the twelfth century all classes of society were already very familiar with the tales of Renart. A verse in Gautier de Coincy’s *Miracles de Notre-Dame* implies that scenes from the Renart epic were painted even in priests’ houses (Pocquet ed., col. 59, vers. 168–172). The extraordinary popularity of the animal epic created around the figure of the trickster fox is perhaps best attested by the fact that since the thirteenth century the personal name of the protagonist, *Renart* (adapted from the German name *Raginhart*, “He who wins through cunning”), has replaced *goupil* to mean “fox” in the French language—and has become the basis of another French word, *renardie* (hypocrisy or craftiness).

Renart the trickster is cruel, unscrupulous, vicious by inclination as much as by necessity, and, above all, cunning. Originating partly in the animal tales of medieval folklore, but mostly in the learned Latin animal poems written by clerics influenced by the fables of Phaedrus, the *Roman de Renart* and its continuations have become the most powerful expression of the satiric spirit of the Middle Ages. Progressively, the trickster figure of Reynard the Fox becomes the

Fabliau

A humorous narrative treating a sexual or obscene theme. Originally a medieval French dialect variant of *fable* (meaning story or folktale), the term *fabliau* first appeared as a self-descriptive label in a series of verse poems at the end of the twelfth century. Though literary in nature, these works may have been intended for oral performance; in any case, they incorporated themes from contemporary oral tradition. About 125 poetic versions of *fabliaux* survive from medieval French, and the genre was also used in Boccaccio's *Decameron* (ca. 1350) and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (ca. 1380), two literary works that mimic oral storytelling sessions.

Critics of the literary *fabliaux* agree that their distinctive style and structure reflect awareness of an underlying folk narrative aesthetic. *Fabliaux* tend to be brief, focusing on an intrigue that is usually erotic in nature. The typical plot structure involves some kind of deception or ruse perpetrated by the main figure, who uses the ruse as license to commit some kind of cultural misdeed. In medieval examples, the story presents women as unfaithful and sexually unrestrained (modern examples often invert this stereotype). The story's style is characterized by irony, both in its commentary on events and in its use of elevated, 'courtly' language to describe sexually explicit or scatological events. Many narrative themes found in the literary *fabliaux* have since been collected from oral tradition in many cultures.

In contemporary American folklore, *fabliau*-type narratives survive in several distinct formal genres. Themes of female infidelity appear in ballads such as 'Our Goodman' (Child 274), in which a husband finds more and more evidence of his wife's infidelity, such as 'a head lying on my pillow.' He is, however, pacified by her witty explanations of the incriminating items as common household objects, such as 'a cabbage head.' Many folktales and jokes also continue *fabliau* themes: the widespread 'Rabbit Herd' (AT 570), for instance, shows the hero using a magical object to seduce a king's daughters and wife and humiliate the king, often by having him kiss his donkey's rump.

Some medieval *fabliaux* begin by asserting the 'truth' of the story that follows; hence, it is interesting that some contemporary legends relate *fabliau*-like plots that 'really happened.' In 'The Nude Birthday Party,' for example, a would-be philanthropist is taken home by his secretary. Assuming a conquest is forthcoming, he strips naked and jumps through a doorway, only to find that his wife and friends have arranged a surprise party for him there.

The *fabliau* in the modern sense is best characterized as a narrative that plays with the bounds of public decency, both in its subject and in its style. Most of the modern examples deal with potentially obscene themes but in ways that leave them suitable for 'polite' mixed audiences. Thus, perhaps the hallmark of the genre is its ability to deal with sexual or scatological topics through clever indirection rather than directly through vulgarity.

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symbol of cunning and of hypocrisy, two aspects of evil, one of the major preoccupations of medieval culture.

Michèle Simonsen

See Also Animals; Trickster.

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Anthropological Approach

Subject selection, definitions of folklore, data selection, research methods, and theories of folklore research closely related to and associated with those employed in cultural anthropology. Folklore and anthropology arose together as disciplines in response to the interests and concerns of an England that had accepted Charles Darwin's theory of evolution and social Darwinism. An important and long-standing difference between the disciplines from the time of their common English origins—a difference that grew out of and in turn shaped the disciplines' definitions of themselves—was their subject selection. From the beginning in England, there was a division of labor and laborers so that anthropology traveled through space and folklore traveled through time to explore the evolutionary stages of man. From the beginnings of their histories, anthropologists researched contemporary people and cultures other than their own around the world, and folklorists researched the lore of their own people as it existed in the past through an examination of peasant culture as a stage of their own cultures' histories.

The disciplines of folklore and cultural anthropology have varied greatly through the times and spaces they have shared, but perhaps no more so than in their definitions of folklore. The Russian structural folklorist Vladimir Propp strongly denied that material culture and custom—he called the complex of custom and belief “spiritual culture”—were folklore and argued that these genres of tradition should be left to ethnologists. The American folklife movement insisted just as strongly that material culture and custom—from the 1950s on, Don Yoder also insisted that folklore included something very akin to Propp's “spiritual folklore”—were an essential part of folklore and demanded that greater attention

be paid to them. At various times in various places, members of both professions have claimed as their province various combinations of verbal lore, customary and material culture, and the folk.

Another issue of concern between members of each discipline is whether the data of the field are to be garnered through written records or firsthand experience (library or field research). Some early folklorists—Andrew Lang, for example—and anthropologists were content to draw their data from the recorded observations of others. Later folklorists and anthropologists often insisted upon conducting field research themselves and gathering their own materials for analysis supplemented by their observations. Both field- and non-field-based research have been conducted by scholars in folklore and in anthropology at various times throughout the disciplines' histories.

There have been many anthropological approaches to folklore based upon cross-cultural theories. Some of these theories quickly fell out of fashion. Max Müller's *solar mythology* claimed that folklore was devolutionary. He defended the idea that it was possible to work backward, transcend the "disease of language," experience anew the wonder of an age in which primitive man worshipped the sun, and discover that the folklore of the present was but a dim reflection or a broken-down myth of the time when the sun was king. Müller's theory—and his reputation—were destroyed by the power of the pen when Andrew Lang published a brilliant parody using Müller's methods to prove that both "Max" and "Müller" were reflections of solar myth.

Max Müller and Andrew Lang were united, however, in their reliance upon published materials for research. Lang's own *survivals theory* was in keeping with the widespread acceptance of evolutionary patterns of thought in the England of his time, and his wit and tenacity won the day. His vigorous defense of the idea that all peoples and cultures evolved in a fixed, orderly progression of stages so that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny was a folkloristic attempt to understand the present by studying the past, just as anthropologists have sought to understand their cultures by studying others—different responses to the same theory. Lang's theory, however, had its day and slowly lost its influence in both folklore and anthropology over a period of decades.

Other anthropological approaches to folklore also foundered when field-tested and gradually were disproved and discarded by folklorists. The *myth-ritual theory*, an essentially literary approach espoused by Sir James Frazer and others who sought to discover the patterns and forms of the ritual of early man underlying literature, was, like Max Müller's solar mythology, essentially devolutionary and therefore in conflict with the evolutionary theory that dominated Western thought. Consequently, myth-ritualism was destined to be discarded. Although the process was more gradual, the myth-ritual theory, like solar mythology, also lost its influence and adherents over the years.

The *pattern theory of culture*, *ethnography*, *functionalism*, *structuralism*, and *symbolic anthropology* are all anthropological theories that underlie or are elements of widely accepted and employed anthropological approaches to folklore. Because of its generative relationship to other anthropological approaches to folklore, Ruth Benedict's pattern theory of culture, it can be argued, is the anthropological theory most basic to folklore scholarship in the last days of the twentieth century. Benedict asserted the idea that all parts of culture are related and reflect—albeit sometimes in different ways—the same values and beliefs, so that unconscious canons of choice produce a unified whole of behaviors, values, and beliefs. Benedict's theory implies that culture is one, each part evincing the whole, so that oral and material and customary folklore are all windows into culture. The widespread acceptance of Benedict's theory revolutionized the definition of culture and the study of folklore. A good deal of controversy was generated within the discipline of folklore by this anthropological approach (in two books published in 1972, Richard M. Dorson both condemned and commended the idea that lore including ordinary conversation could be used to understand values). Thus, it is somewhat surprising to see that Benedict's ideas have been so widely accepted that they became a truism and the basis of a great deal of research and general knowledge in the 1990s, even among people who may not know that she was the scholar who first popularized the pattern theory of culture. Folklore was the principal cultural item she studied. Her concept of the great significance of folklore follows from the definition of culture she popularized and has led to a number of anthropological approaches to folklore.

The importance of Ruth Benedict's pattern theory of culture is matched by the influence of the method she used to report her research—the *ethnography*. Ethnography is a method of studying cultures in which researchers immerse themselves in ways of life to perceive them as they are lived and then write articles and books recounting and interpreting their fieldwork. Such studies are designed to enable others to experience what it is like to be a member of the cultures studied. The method existed long before Benedict, but it was popularized because it was the method she and her colleagues employed. Clifford Geertz, along with many other contemporary anthropologists from the 1970s onward, further emphasized ethnography as an important and successful way of exploring culture, and ethnography has become a major literary genre and anthropological approach to folklore.

Structuralism is another anthropological approach to folklore. Syntagmatic structuralism is concerned with discovering the basic, surface structures of folklore—the method is most often applied to oral lore—and has become one of the most frequently employed methods of folklore research today. Vladimir Propp's morphological analysis, the oral-formulaic method, and William Labov's system of narrative analysis are widely employed structural analysis methods applied to

the study of narrative and other oral forms, and there have been a number of widely accepted structural analyses of conversational genres such as riddles and proverbs. Claude Lévi-Strauss's paradigmatic structuralism—the quest for underlying deep structures (usually sets of binary oppositions)—was extremely popular for a period of time in the middle of the twentieth century. Lévi-Strauss claimed that his sets of binary opposites were universal and reflected the basic nature of human thought. The theory had become less influential and widely accepted in folklore by the 1990s.

Benedict's insistence that all spheres of culture are meaningfully related provided a rationale for approaches attempting to discover how folklore functions. The idea that all forms of folklore satisfy some important psychological, social, or cultural function is a basic axiom of most folklore research.

Symbolic anthropology, interpreting symbols in the context of the processes of social and cultural life, is another anthropological approach to folklore. Victor Turner disagreed with the rigidity and conformity that he felt had become a part of structural and functional anthropology and argued instead for an analysis of symbols. Turner and other symbolic anthropologists saw symbols as conscious and unconscious representations and objects of power. His method and his insistence upon interpreting symbols from the broadest possible perspective as complex data reflecting multivalence and condensation have been widely accepted as an anthropological approach to folklore; moreover, his approach is yet another way of saying, as did Benedict, that all cultural traits have meaning. Anthropology in general, throughout its long history, has studied man; folklore has studied the products of the human imagination; and symbolic anthropology studies the products of the human imagination in order to understand man.

Anthropology and folklore both developed and changed over their histories from Tylor to Turner. Folklore continued to broaden its field of study, method, and theoretical orientations as it developed as a discipline. Since the 1990s, functional, structural, and symbolic anthropology has been part of anthropological approaches to folklore. A major feature of the discipline of folklore since the last decades of the twentieth century is the fact that it is eclectic. Most folklorists pursued research in terms of a limited number of topics, but most recognized as an ideal a truly complete anthropological approach. This approach would examine people of all cultures as revealed by research methods emphasizing the firsthand experiencing of material culture, custom, and oral lore.

Many American folklorists and American graduate programs have defined their field of study not in terms of lore—item or genres—but in terms of anthropological approaches to folklore. Over the last 20 years, folk cultural field research has concentrated upon people and their lore and is one of the most commonly used methods for dissertation research in major American folklore graduate schools, and for that reason, such research is apt to be one of the most

important approaches to folklore for at least the next generation of graduate students.

Keith Cunningham

See Also Acculturation; Anthropology, Symbolic; Cultural Relativism; Ethnography; Evolutionary Theory; Fieldwork; Functionalism; Myth-Ritual Theory; Structuralism.

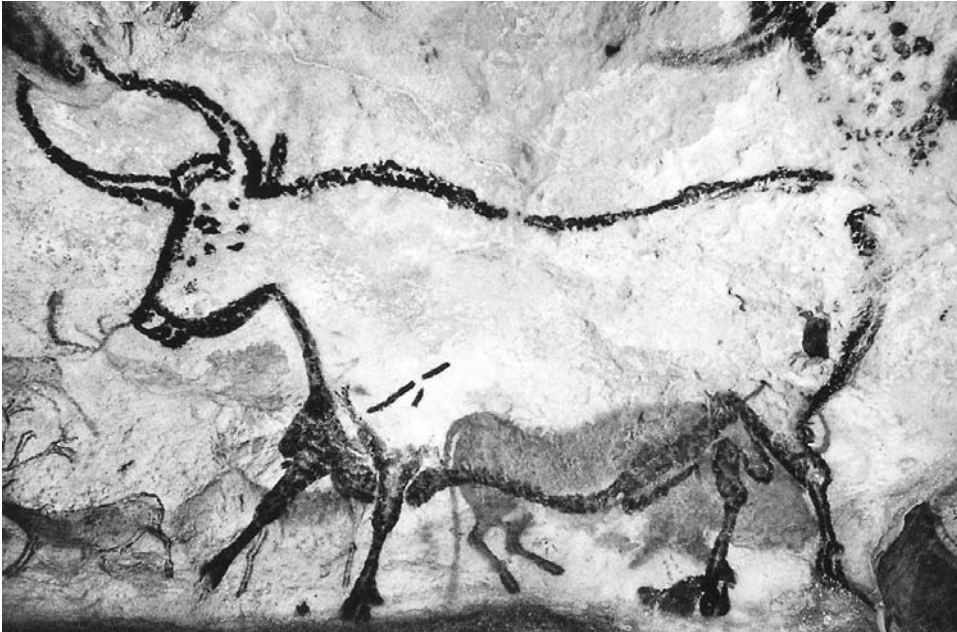
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Anthropology, Symbolic

The study of the nature of the symbols used in different cultures, in ritual, in performances, and in daily life where full meaning requires more than literal expression. A symbol has two components—a solid, visible, or otherwise sensory sign and the idea to which it points. Symbolic anthropology interprets symbols in the context of the processes of social and cultural life.

In the history of the symbolizing process, investigators are able to trace symbolization to *Homo erectus*, who lived a million to a hundred thousand years ago, before *Homo sapiens*. Symbolization was evidenced in the signs of ochre pigment on the bones of these earliest hominids. Later (ca. 35,000 to 19,000 years ago), the caves of Lascaux and Altamira were filled with pictures of shamanic scenes, pictures that themselves are thought to have been objects of power. Human beings appear to possess a predisposition for symbolization (indeed, this trait is shared by some animals). The practice of producing an



Prehistoric painting of a bull (which appears to be wounded), one of about 600 Paleolithic-era paintings found at Lascaux Cave near present-day Dordogne, France, in 1940. (Corel)

alternative object to the ordinary one—a picture of a bull, for example—is deep in the techniques of ritual and usually goes beyond representation. There exists the ordinary object, the bull, and the picture of it—two things thrown together. Within the depiction lies not only meaning and ideological message, a teaching device, but also actual sacredness and efficacy. The nature of the sacredness is very hard to determine.

The use of the word *symbol* was first known to have appeared in ancient Greece, though undoubtedly a reflexive process about what we call *symbols* was afoot much earlier. Certainly, the history of the concept is considerably older than the discipline of anthropology. The word *symbol* itself derives from the Greek *sym*, meaning together, and *ballein*, meaning to throw—that is, two things thrown together. A pair of friends would mark their alliance by breaking a precious token in half, whereupon each treasured one of the halves as a mark of identification. The Church took up the Greek idea of a mark or symbol and termed the creed itself a symbol. Later, the Church developed a field of symbolic theology in which *symbol* began to take on its present meaning based on the mysteries inherent in a religious object—its double nature, outward and inward.

Symbolism came under the close attention of thinkers during the romantic movement in the nineteenth century, mainly in the theorizing of Johann Bachofen (1815–1887)—specifically, his notion of an original “mother right” among early

humanity and his theory that the symbolism of funerary rituals was related to fertility. However, as we have seen, symbolism in the activities of the world's peoples was flourishing for ages without scholarly analysis. It is how we look back on symbolism now that appears to determine our definitions. We already see two ways of looking at symbols—as a mark or really a sign and as having power—which Jung as a scholar began to recognize in the early twentieth century in his work on the living symbol and dream archetypes. In modern religious studies, Mircea Eliade held that symbols are true parts of religion itself; he pointed out that an ordinary object could become genuinely sacred while remaining just the same as it is.

Clearly, to obtain an unbiased view of symbolism, only genuine participant study can pinpoint what is actually going on, even at such simple occasions as a folk wedding or when a hunter takes an animal.

Within the discipline of anthropology, the basic thinking on symbolism was founded on the concepts of Émile Durkheim and his school centered in France in the first decade of the twentieth century. Durkheim taught the primacy of the *social* in symbolic analysis and held that symbols were always social representations. Durkheim even attempted to bring theology down to earth by claiming that symbols were the building blocks society constructed for itself for the task of deifying itself. After Durkheim, the study of symbolism became ramified and divided, notably in the work of the folklorist Arnold van Gennep, who broke free of Durkheim's strictures by drawing attention to the liminal, in-between phase in rites of passage, that no-man's-land beyond the provenance of normal social structures and their self-deifying tendencies.

Others, notably the linguist Edward Sapir, began to reveal the complexity of a symbol as multivalent, that is, possessing many meanings and condensing them. David Schneider, a down-to-earth functionalist and authority on kinship and marriage, showed how the major (though hidden) symbol driving our conceptions of kinship and marriage was semen itself, at the core. In the 1930s and 1940s, the study of kinship became central in anthropology. (Interestingly, kinship studies have been vindicated by contemporary theorists working on the symbolism of the body.)

Then Victor Turner appeared on the scene, breaking from the sole focus on kinship and social structure and resuscitating van Gennep's work from the oblivion it had suffered while most anthropologists were following the course of structural functionalism, which taught, as Durkheim had, that symbols serve the main structures of society and follow them in style. Turner claimed a distinctly creative and different character for the symbols of rites of passage—*liminal symbols*, as he termed them; these symbols might even carry a revolutionary message, subverting social structures while sheltered in that temporarily antistructural phase of the rite of passage. Turner became the principal analyst of symbolism in anthropology, emphasizing—and here he followed Durkheim—that symbols

were factors in social processes. However, he argued that these processes were not necessarily structure-bound.

In his analysis of the symbol itself, Turner expositied the important likeness between the symbolic object (the signifier) and its meaning (what is signified). Symbols were semantically “open”: The meaning was not absolutely fixed. Turner saw how a symbol might become an independent force that was a product of many forces, even opposing ones. He was much influenced by the symbolic anthropologists, psychologists, and other theorists who went before him—Freud, with his polarization of the symbol into the ideological pole and the sensory pole of meaning (Turner cited the example of the Ndembu initiation symbol, the “milk tree,” whose sensory pole was the bodily and emotional experience of milk and whose ideological pole, dynamized by the sensory pole, connoted the tribal virtues and the principle of matriliney), and also Jung, with his insight that a live symbol works and possesses power when pregnant with meaning but dies when it is dissected and analyzed. On the basis of this insight, Turner realized that there is no need for participants to render into words what symbols say, for symbols transmit their messages in a number of sensory codes simultaneously. Yet Turner himself analyzed. He followed Sapir in his discovery of the multivalence and condensation of meaning in dominant symbols. He noted conscious and unconscious levels in the symbols’ meanings. He perforce had to alternate between regarding symbols as representations and as objects of power. He described the shrine pole of the Ndembu hunters of Zambia as not so much an object of cognition, a mere set of referents to known phenomena, but rather as “a unitary power,” the slaughterous power of the hunter spirit itself. His analysis of symbolism stood, whether he took the representationist view or the power view.

Other symbolologists abounded. Raymond Firth pointed out that the relation between the two elements of a symbol, the signifier and the signified, was that of concrete to abstract, particular to general. Claude Lévi-Strauss saw symbols as key items in the universal cognitive structures of the mind. Clifford Geertz’s definition of a symbol, similar to Firth’s, was “any object, act, event, quality, or relation which serves as a vehicle for a conception.” He explained how symbols are layered in multiple networks of meanings and warned that the symbols of each culture should be studied in situ, without attempting a universalist theory. Mary Douglas was a universalist, regarding symbols as corresponding to the attitudes held by a culture toward the human body—which is very much a basic universal.

Further hints of the independent character of symbols have appeared. Roy Wagner showed how symbols become independent entities, ever obviating themselves in new forms. He became interested in the way a percept in the brain may be formed at some central location in the visual system by using stimuli that could not possibly produce that percept at an earlier, more primary location. The percept requires its own special, internal “retina” for the formation of the image. In other words, a

percept with its rich meaning—a symbol, for instance—arrives in human minds as a manufactured item produced in its own peculiar way. Wagner said that this “abstracting” process is not the kind of abstraction that produces items useful in logic and the like but is part of the generative and ongoing process of complex symbol production itself. This appears to be parallel to the processes that produce poetry.

Barbara Babcock pointed out an important characteristic of symbols in festivals and celebrations that is of particular interest to folklorists: a well-marked surplus of signifiers—multitudes of symbols produced to bespeak the meaning of the celebration in an exuberantly fantastic multiplication of color, cloth, masks, costumes, and fireworks, even to the point of indeterminate nonsense. This surplus creates a self-transparent discourse that mocks and subverts the monological arrogance of “official” systems of signification. Here are hints of Victor Turner’s “antistructure,” which, he said, is the mark of the rite of passage; there are also reminders of Mikhail Bakhtin’s praise of the vitality of the people’s second life, as expressed in *Rabelais and His World*.

Another extension of symbol theory comes from Don Handelman’s work on the symbolic type, again of significance in the study of folk festivals. The symbolic type may be a Hopi clown, the *wau* (a disreputably disguised uncle in Iatmul initiation in New Guinea), a lascivious old man figure in Pakistani weddings, or the hobbyhorse intruder muddling the neat figures of Morris dancing. There are many examples in folklife literature of this clumsy, contradictory figure, often suggestive of overfertility; it is a figure that will not stabilize like the respectable gods of the Hopi, for instance, or the royals in *Midsummer Night’s Dream*. The fool figure classically appears within the boundaries of rites of passage or yearly rites, demonstrating uncertainty and also process itself, and thereby it is able to shift ritual occasions through their sequential phases.

Another school, that of critical anthropology and postmodernism, looks at modern symbolism under the rubric of commodity fetishism, including the symbolism of store goods, advertising, and land development, as displayed in the contemporary popular scene.

Meanwhile, in the most contemporary discussion, the Africanist Michael Jackson has held that the controversial question of whether the effect of a symbol is objective or subjective should be subsumed under the performance and experiencing of the ritual process—thus downplaying the word *symbol* as a nonissue: If one actually experiences ritual, mere representation is left behind. Is symbology really the way to study human ritual or action sequences of deepest fundamental importance? Robert Desjarlais has looked back on a generation of anthropologists who worked under the guiding assumption that culture consists of networks of symbols and webs of significance, so much so that later ethnographers even considered human bodies as texts, emotions as discourses, and healings as symbolic. He has argued that here we have drifted away from experience of the body.

We must go back and consider ritual direct, from the plane of the body and not as interpreted through the mind.

In short, an anthropology of the senses is emerging that is returning to the study of bodily experience. And paradoxically, we are gaining an even richer understanding of what we have called symbolic objects. Our understanding is richer because the object (such as a sacred tree, a ritual food, or perhaps a song) may be given a deeper respect—a respect that ethnographers (and certainly the people themselves) often have actually felt, with something like Rudolf Otto's awe. We may now be able to accept that, for example, the whale meat from the self-sacrificing spirit being, the whale, is both bodily delicious and charged with the whale's spirituality—a direct process in which representation has no part. This brings symbolism out in its full dimensions; we see no cutoff point where logic steps in and says, this is only blubber.

From this summary, incomplete as it is, the depth and diversity of thought on symbols in anthropology can be inferred. Symbols are all around us. To paraphrase Vasilii Kandinsky, there is no form, there is nothing in the world, that says nothing.

Edith Turner

See Also Anthropological Approach; Freudian Psychology; Jungian Psychology; Phenomenology; Semiotics.

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Antiquarianism

Antiquarianism is an intellectual movement in historical studies, which, particularly in Britain, had a significant influence on the early development of the study of folklore. The book often regarded as the first full-length study of folklore in English, the Rev. Henry Bourne's *Antiquitates Vulgares* (1725), was very much a product of antiquarianism, and other important early works in folklore in England were produced by scholars who were antiquarians. Antiquarians (also called antiquaries) collected information on what they termed "antiquities," and until William J. Thoms coined the term *folk-lore* in 1846, those cultural materials that we now refer to as "folklore" were called "popular antiquities" (that is, antiquities of the common people).

Antiquities (also termed "remains" or "relics") consisted of whatever came down from the past and might include the ruins of ancient buildings, maps, charters, epitaphs, old coinage or weaponry, legal records, descriptions of tombs, and printed or drawn views of buildings. The term could also refer to such actions as traditional customs, which might be assumed to stretch back into time past, thus implicitly including folklore. Interest in such antiquities on the Continent as well as in Britain during the Renaissance marked the beginning of modern historical study, as intellectuals began to look for documents that could yield knowledge about the past rather than uncritically including fanciful accounts, as had earlier historical chroniclers. Interest in antiquities was not, however, simply born out of a pure interest in learning history, for the antiquarians had political and ideological agendas.

Some interest in antiquities was nationalistic. The thinkers of the Renaissance saw the ancient world as civilization incarnate and sought to connect the English nation as directly as possible to that world in order to lend prestige to English culture. Thus, some people studied antiquities so that they might establish associations between the English localities where ancient ruins were found and the Roman world.

Other antiquarians had political motives in addition to nationalism. Legal antiquarians of the seventeenth century, including William Dugdale and Edward Coke, used the knowledge derived from the study of antiquities to help construct an elaborate system of law that established the value of precedents. What they found was generally used to show the power of the Commons in the past to limit royal power. An almost mystical respect for the past and for precedent would enable them to make arguments that had significant implications for the exercise of political power and rights.

Politics also pervaded religious interest in antiquities. Henry VIII had established the Church of England in the sixteenth century, but it was advantageous for Henry and his successors to argue that this church in fact had ancient roots in England and that its practices were old English ones, which were now being reestablished after having been changed and abandoned by the Roman Catholic

Church. Mathew Parker, archbishop of Canterbury under Elizabeth I, directed antiquarian research to unearth knowledge of the pre-Roman Catholic Christian church in England.

The use of the term *antiquities* to refer to old manners and customs appears as early as 1557, and sixteenth-century antiquarians included in their compilations notice of cultural materials we would call folklore, such as proverbs. Thus, the beginnings of interest in folklore came out of a movement at the center of the intellectual trends and the social and political turmoil of the times. Though Henry Bourne's *Antiquitates Vulgares* did not appear until the first quarter of the eighteenth century, it fell within the tradition of earlier religio-political interests. During the period of Oliver Cromwell's Puritan Commonwealth in England in the mid-seventeenth century, some folk practices came under attack as being unsuitably Roman Catholic or pagan in origin. Traditional Christmas carols, for example, were virtually stamped out. Even in Bourne's day, the Church of England was under attack from reformist groups and sects, some of which also objected to folk traditions—Christmas celebrations, for example. Bourne wrote to defend these “popular antiquities” by attempting to show that they predated Roman Catholic influence or that they were pagan (which was, at the time, more acceptable than being Catholic).

Bourne's landmark volume thus emerged from the theoretical precepts of antiquarianism and addressed issues related to earlier antiquarian concerns. Yet antiquarian interest in folk materials, which picked up in the eighteenth century, was not always so intellectually focused. John Brand used Bourne's work as the basis for his own *Observations on Popular Antiquities* (1777)—largely a compilation of information on folk customs that does not argue any strong thesis. Other works about folklore from this time are mostly collections of one sort or another, which pull together material without much analysis or theoretical grounding. Antiquarianism brought to early interest in folklore a method (the extensive collection of information) and a concept (that the cultural fragments called antiquities could help our understanding of the past). However, antiquarian folklorists were much more concerned with the collecting aspect than with actually attempting to use what they found to study past culture (though the idea that their collection could lend themselves to that end loosely underlay their endeavor, especially after similar ideas developed by J. G. Herder and the Grimm Brothers in Germany became influential in England in the early nineteenth century).

Early ballad scholars were certainly influenced by antiquarian ideas, thinking that the narrative songs (ballads) they collected gave them a view of earlier times. Ballad scholars of the Romantic Era of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were fascinated by the Middle Ages and saw ballads as medieval remains. After the union with England in 1707 eliminated Scotland's independent existence, ballad collecting in Scotland was often a nationalistic endeavor, the songs being revered relics of earlier Scottish culture.

Antiquarianism had a further influence on late nineteenth-century folk studies and anthropology when Edward Tylor, Andrew Lang, and others stressed the importance of studying what they called “survivals”—cultural leftovers that helped trace the historical development of culture—an idea derived, in part, from the concept of antiquities.

Frank de Caro

See Also Ballad; Belief, Folk; Grimm Brothers; Proverb.

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Appalachian Folklore

Geography and History

Appalachian folklore constitutes a distinctive set of traditions that emerged historically through the intermingling of several cultures in an often-misunderstood region of the United States. Living among the mountains, Appalachia's people have usually resided in valleys or hollows and so have been accustomed to feelings of entrapment and isolation as well as the security of familiar and seemingly unchanging surroundings. While scholars have debated its specific boundaries, this particular region—in recent years most often called Appalachia, though formerly referred to by such names as the southern Appalachians or, simply, the southern mountains—certainly encompasses northeastern Alabama, northern Georgia, the northernmost tip of South Carolina, western North Carolina, eastern Tennessee, eastern Kentucky, western Virginia, and all of West Virginia. Other definitions of the region incorporate southeastern Ohio, western Maryland, and western Pennsylvania, whereas the Appalachian Regional Commission, a federal agency established in the 1960s to serve the region's economic needs, includes northeastern Mississippi and southwestern New York in its definition of Appalachia.

Whatever its outer boundaries, the Appalachian region inarguably consists of at least five distinct subregions. These are, from east to west, the Blue Ridge Province (extending from south-central Pennsylvania to northern Georgia and encompassing the Blue Ridge crest and parallel mountain ranges on the North Carolina–Tennessee border, including the Great Smokies and the Unakas as well

as in-between ranges, most notably the Black Mountains); the Valley and Ridge Province (incorporating the Great Valley of the Appalachians and featuring a network of rivers and ridges); the Alleghenies (located primarily in West Virginia, western Maryland, and western Pennsylvania); the Cumberland Mountains (a range on the Virginia–Kentucky border known for its coal deposits); and the plateau (collectively referred to as the Appalachian Plateaus, including the coal-rich Cumberland Plateau of eastern Kentucky and eastern Tennessee).

Because its mountains block eastward-drifting air carrying moisture from the Gulf of Mexico, the Appalachian region generally receives more rainfall than do the lower elevation areas to its west or east. Frequent rain, the region's temperate climate, and its wide range of elevations have encouraged considerable diversity of plants and animals. The first human inhabitants of Appalachia were aboriginal people who lived in the region during the Paleo-Indian period, approximately 10,000 years ago. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries CE, Europeans in Appalachia—first, Spanish and, later, French and English explorers—encountered two Native American tribes: the Cherokee and the Shawnee. European groups who settled on the Appalachian frontier during the eighteenth century—Scots-Irish, English, German, French Huguenot, Swiss, and Welsh—engaged in warfare with Native Americans before the American Revolution, then co-existed peaceably in southern Appalachia for several decades through the late 1830s, when the Cherokee were forced to march to Indian Territory by the federal government during the notorious Trail of Tears. Historically, Appalachia's distance from population centers, combined with the region's mountainous terrain and extensive forestland, necessitated that settlers from Europe learn survival techniques from indigenous peoples as well as from settlers of other ethnicities. For instance, Scots-Irish settlers, when arriving in Appalachia, had little prior experience living in wilderness, having previously dwelled in deforested, densely populated Ulster. Hence, they needed to learn hunting-gathering and woodcraft techniques from members of other ethnic groups—specifically, Cherokees and Germans—already in Appalachia. Each of the aforementioned ethnicities contributed to the repository of folkways used and shared in Appalachia.

The primary migration route for the European settlement of Appalachia—from central Pennsylvania southwestward into Virginia, then through the Great Valley of the Appalachians into North Carolina—created the historical circumstances that led to the mixing of cultural influences. In the early eighteenth century, Germans from eastern Pennsylvania established many of the first farmsteads along Virginia's Shenandoah River. During this same era, economically marginal people of English descent ventured westward from the Virginia Tidewater over the Blue Ridge into the fertile Shenandoah Valley. By the mid-eighteenth century, Scots-Irish immigrants, also journeying from eastern Pennsylvania, bypassed that

already occupied valley for available properties on the slopes of the Virginia and North Carolina Blue Ridge.

From the early eighteenth century through the late nineteenth century, most people of European ancestry residing in rural Appalachia maintained a largely self-sufficient way of life combining various food-producing folkways (foraging, hunting, stock-raising, and crop-farming) with such traditional trades as blacksmithing, gunsmithing, and woodworking. Before the twentieth century, most products—whether wagon axles, tools, quilts, musical instruments, or moonshine—were handmade within home communities or were obtained through bartering.

Religious Beliefs

Belief systems within Appalachia were based on Protestant Christianity (even the region's Native American groups such as the Cherokee had embraced European faiths), and yet many Appalachian people observed traditional beliefs structured around non-standardized interpretations of Christian doctrine. Folk religions emerged and proliferated in Appalachia because of the region's long-standing geographical remoteness from population centers. Beginning in the mid-eighteenth century, members of several European Protestant denominations—including German Dunkards, Mennonites, and Amish—intentionally settled in Appalachia to preserve their anti-establishment belief systems in relative distance from mainstream society. As a general rule, rural Appalachian communities relied on formally untrained, sometimes illiterate preachers whose interpretations of scripture were inherently esoteric. Embracing the teachings of such preachers, sects prospered with little or no obeisance to mainline churches. Most such sects were fundamentalist, reflecting strictly literal readings of the Bible. Several Baptist sects in Appalachia, for instance, practiced such traditional Christian rituals as full-immersion baptisms in rivers and creeks (metaphorical re-creations of Christ's baptism in the River Jordan) and footwashing (based on John 13: 14–15). Serpent handling, another Appalachian ritual from a biblical source, allegedly emerged in the early twentieth century after east Tennessean George Went Hensley was directed by God in a vision to take literally lines of scripture from the Book of Mark (16: 17–20), which urged believers to “take up serpents” and to observe other “signs” in order to prove their faith. A small number of Pentecostal and Holiness congregations in Appalachia and the wider South subsequently incorporated the handling of snakes into special worship services, during which time congregations also engaged in displaying other ritual “signs” of faith, including poison-drinking (most often strychnine) and fire-touching (for example, hot coals or a lit torch).

Some facets of the Appalachian belief system evolved from non-Christian influences, reflecting traditional secular ideas about causal relationships between two phenomena or two actions. Most so-called superstitions involved notions



The Reverend Dewey Chafin takes a poisonous snake out of its box, May 15, 1992, in Jolo, West Virginia. (Getty Images)

brought to Appalachia by European settlers, though over time Appalachian people rejected many superstitions as scientifically unsupportable or as untenable because unauthorized by scripture. One folk belief in Appalachia, “planting by the signs,” involved farmers making decisions about planting and harvesting crops based upon astrological charts printed in commercial mail-order almanacs. These charts, assigning a few days per month to each of the twelve zodiac signs, asserted that every day of a given month was controlled by a sign and therefore possessed some of that sign’s characteristics. For example, a day designated as belonging to one of the zodiac’s “water signs” (Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces) was deemed to be the best time of the month for planting crops. “Planting by the signs” fell out of use as Appalachian people increasingly relied upon daily or weekly weather reports from professional meteorologists.

Myths, Legends, and Folktales

Verbal traditions in Appalachia include local repertoires of proverbs, riddles, rhymes, sayings, legends, folktales, and folksongs. The region’s people have historically employed proverbs in everyday situations to communicate moral perspectives and to encourage socially appropriate behavior. While most regional proverbs were of British origin, some were introduced into Appalachia by Germans and African Americans. Riddles, never as common as proverbs in Appalachia, were either allusive rhymes or one-sentence questions used by a person to test another’s wit or

knowledge base. Some rhymes were verbal components of traditional games for children. In many parts of the region, folk sayings have historically been painted on handmade signs to make public pronouncements of religious conviction.

The first myths told in Appalachia were Native American creation stories, some of which were documented by white ethnologists (most notably James Mooney, who collected, transcribed, and published Cherokee myths). Virtually all the myths held sacred by whites in Appalachia were from Judeo-Christian sources. Many white settlers in Appalachia told local legends that communicated the significance of places (for instance, the mysterious lights seen near Brown Mountain in the North Carolina Blue Ridge), events (such as the railroading disaster commemorated in the song “The Wreck of the Old ‘97”), or people (such as Daniel Boone).

Historically, folktales abounded in Appalachia. Most of these oral narratives either related seemingly supernatural occurrences or endeavored to explore human morality (overtly through stories about human characters or covertly through anthropomorphic, fable-like “animal” stories). The best-known cycle of folktales associated with the region, the Jack tales, originated in the British Isles. Absorbing certain American traits, including mountain settings, Jack tales also retained European elements, including such traditional characters as giants, devils, and kings. The protagonist of these tales was a poor Appalachian boy named Jack, a trickster figure who outsmarted all who would oppress him. Several tales from this cycle, especially “Jack and the Bean Tree,” became widely popular in the twentieth century after members of the Hicks, Harmon, and Ward families—whose ancestors first told Jack tales in western North Carolina during the eighteenth century—shared their versions with folklorists and writers (most crucially, Richard Chase), who disseminated the Appalachian Jack tale repertoire to the American public.

Songs, Ballads, and Music

Appalachia is equally renowned for its ballad and folksong traditions. The oldest non–Native American musical genre in the region, Appalachian balladry evolved from the British ballad tradition. Eighteenth-century settlers from England, Scotland, and Ireland continued to sing in Appalachia at least 100 of the approximately 300 different British ballads categorized in the nineteenth century by scholar Francis James Child.

Appalachian people sang variant texts of British ballads, and those often-truncated narratives, incorporating a blend of European and American characters and settings, were set to simplified (often minor-keyed and pentatonic) melodies. Women were the main practitioners of ballad singing in Appalachia, and they tended to sing ballads a cappella and to employ asymmetrical rhythm and unemotional delivery when performing them.

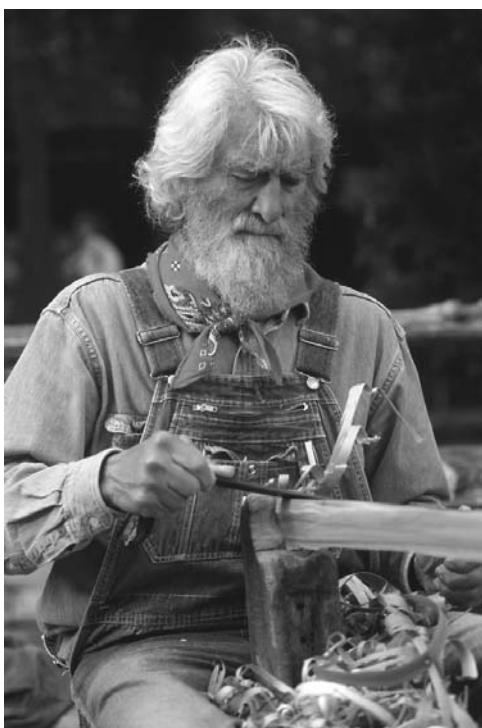
An indigenous ballad tradition, known collectively as Native American balladry, was emerging among Appalachian people of European ancestry by the early

nineteenth century. A number of these ballads, including “Omie Wise,” “Tom Dula,” and “John Henry,” chronicled actual historical events that occurred in Appalachia. Two other song traditions in Appalachia were lyric songs—that is, non-religious songs that were less narrative and more overtly emotional than ballads—and sacred songs (including hymns). Both traditions influenced the rise of commercial country music and commercial Southern gospel music.

Native Americans during sacred ceremonies performed the first instrumental music heard in Appalachia. Cherokee musicians, for instance, played drums and cane flutes to accompany ceremonial dancing and singing. The most common instrument among eighteenth-century European settlers was the fiddle. Another European instrument, the Highland bagpipe, was never widely played in Appalachia until being revived across the region during the late twentieth century. Appalachian fiddlers played a diverse repertoire of tunes—many of which were based on British folk melodies—for dances and for other social gatherings. The banjo, derived from an African American instrument, was transported into Appalachia by black tradesmen traveling on riverboats during the early nineteenth century. White performers soon embraced the banjo, playing it in minstrel shows that visited Appalachian communities. By the late nineteenth century, fiddle-banjo duos were common in the region, and by the early twentieth century, newly introduced instruments—guitar, mandolin, and Hawaiian-style steel guitar—were combined with fiddles and banjos. This string-band music was increasingly fast paced, with more accomplished groups of musicians playing a remarkably complex music that incorporated jazz-influenced syncopation and improvisation. Numerous Appalachian string bands made commercial recordings during the 1920s, and some, such as the Skillet Lickers from north Georgia, became nationally popular. By the mid-1940s, string band music had evolved into bluegrass music, a commercial music initially shaped by Bill Monroe, a musician from western Kentucky, and by several musicians from Appalachia, including Earl Scruggs and Lester Flatt. During the urban folk music revival of the 1950s and 1960s, both native and non-native musicians began to play Appalachian music on instruments formerly unheard or uncommon in Appalachia, including harmonica, autoharp, fretted dulcimer, and hammered dulcimer.

Festivals and Celebrations

People in Appalachia have commemorated their cultural heritage by establishing and maintaining a variety of festivals. Regional festivals have promoted local agriculture (such as the Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival in Winchester, Virginia); represented the range of folklife traditions in Appalachia (for instance, the Blue Ridge Folklife Festival in Ferrum, Virginia); showcased a specific regional tradition (the National Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough, Tennessee); acknowledged the heritage of an ethnic group (notably, the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games and Gathering of Scottish Clans in Linville, North Carolina);



Cedar chair maker, Sherman Wooten, shaves a piece of cedar during the Tennessee Fall Homecoming festival at the Museum of Appalachia, Norris, Tennessee, 1996. (Raymond Gehman/Corbis)

celebrated a historic event (for example, Gold Rush Days in Dahlonega, Georgia); or honored a prominent individual associated with the region (the John Henry Days Festival in Talcott, West Virginia). Today, Appalachia not only hosts the longest-running annual folk music festival in the United States (the Mountain Dance and Folk Festival, held in Asheville, North Carolina, since 1928), but also the nation's largest music festival (Merlefest in Wilkesboro, North Carolina).

Dance and Drama

Despite the fact that dancing was often officially viewed in Appalachia as a forbidden activity, the people of the region created some distinctive dance traditions. Appalachian people danced at Saturday night get-togethers and at such celebratory events as harvest gatherings. Buckdancing—a solo dance from the region combining elements of Cherokee ritual dancing, Irish jigs, and African American flat-foot—encouraged improvisation and individualism. Many regional dances were integral parts of social activities, including the play-party, a socially condoned courtship dance for younger people. Participants in this dance acted out through the use of gestures the lyrics of traditional play-party songs, most of which reflected everyday routines of rural life. Other social dances from the region were intended for adults and incorporated elements from English reels, French quadrilles, and Scottish country dances. Most Appalachian social dances were led by a caller who

would guide dancers—whether organized in squares, circles, or lines—through a sequence of maneuvers to the accompaniment of live music. Each dance routine constituted a specific sequence of dance moves that callers would request from dancers by such descriptive names as Dive and Shoot the Owl. Clogging, a traditional regional social dance, spawned a modern team dance known as precision clogging, which attracted widespread attention because of its intricate choreography and colorful costumes.

Appalachia has not produced a true folk drama. Several “outdoor dramas” are regularly staged in Appalachia, yet these are the antithesis of folk drama, since they are commercial events intended for mainstream audiences. Presented in open-air theaters during the summer tourism season, “outdoor dramas” are scripted and choreographed to portray stories from Appalachian history. One well-known example, *Unto These Hills*, is staged each summer in Cherokee, North Carolina, and takes a romanticized, even sentimentalized approach to telling the story of the Trail of Tears.

Sports and Games

Traditional Appalachian games, which usually contained verbal, customary, and material components, included indoor games for two to several people and outdoor games for both small and large groups. All regional games were intended to help people pass the time constructively. The indoor game Fox and Geese, for example, bore rules that resembled checkers but utilized corn kernels and a homemade board. Some traditional indoor games from Appalachia (including Old Granny Wiggins Is Dead) provided groups with opportunities to solve imaginary problems through teamwork. Outdoor chase games were popular not only because they required minimal equipment, but also because they encouraged mingling among males and females. Other outdoor games formerly or currently popular in Appalachia involved specialized equipment including horseshoes, marbles, mumblety-peg (a knife game), and various rope and stick games. Several ballgames were once popular in the region, including catball, fieldball, and townball. (The latter two, both team sports, were forerunners of baseball.)

Arts, Crafts, and Architecture

Appalachia’s folk architecture emerged out of the confluence of several ethnic traditions in the region. The Appalachian log cabin, for instance, combined German woodworking and Slavic mortaring techniques with British design features. Log cabins were either square, reflecting an English design brought into Appalachia from the Virginia piedmont, or rectangular, a modification of either an Irish or a Scandinavian design transported into Appalachia by settlers from Pennsylvania. Other traditional architectural structures in Appalachia, including barns, outbuildings, and

mills, were all likely based on designs brought by German settlers from Pennsylvania. Historically, one of the more distinctive barn designs built in Appalachia was the cantilever barn, today still visible in a few eastern Tennessee and southwestern Virginia counties. This design, accommodating Appalachia's topography, allowed farmers to carry crops grown up the slope directly onto the barn's second floor for storage and also permitted the easy loading of crops onto wagons parked on the barn's first floor. To protect crops and control animals, people in Appalachia built fences—generally out of wood, since that was more accessible than stone. Two general types of wooden fences were dominant in Appalachia—picket and split-rail, the latter of which was probably a variation of a Scandinavian prototype.

Given the abundance of trees in the region, Appalachian craftspeople created an array of furniture—tables, chairs, stools, benches, and beds—for their own use according to localized traditional designs. Furniture makers in Appalachia utilized only basic tools—axes, saws, knives, braces, and bits—and often worked without nails, screws, and glue, yet they built furniture of lasting quality using a system of tightly fitted, interlocking wooden parts. Also made from wood were containers (including baskets, bowls, and boxes); decorative figurines; toys (stilts, tops, limberjacks, and whimmy diddles); and musical instruments (fiddles, banjos, dulcimers, and whistles).

Some common toys in Appalachia—such as dolls and cornstalk constructions—were built from materials other than wood. Additional regional crafts included shoes (generally incorporating leather produced at home), clothes (woven on the loom from local wool), and quilts featuring a range of designs from the highly structured Log Cabin design to the essentially random Crazy Quilt.

Food

Appalachian foodways combined European food traditions with those borrowed from Native Americans. The earliest European settlers in Appalachia survived by hunting wild game (primarily deer and bear), fishing, gathering wild plants (including berries, nuts, roots, leaves, stems, and edible mushrooms and fungi), and growing cultivated vegetables (corn, beans, pumpkins, and squash) obtained from Native Americans. As the availability of wild animals decreased as a result of over-hunting, Appalachian people began to depend upon the meat of domesticated animals, primarily pigs, cows, and chickens. In addition to the aforementioned foodstuffs, people in the region ate orchard fruits (especially apples and cherries), enjoyed sweeteners (primarily honey and molasses), and drank various beverages (ranging from milk, tea, and cider to various liquors—whiskey being the most popular—brewed in local stills). Historically, cooking was done either in outdoor fire pits or indoor fireplaces, and cooking paraphernalia (racks, hooks, pokers, shovels, pots, and pans) were made from iron obtained outside the community but crafted by local blacksmiths.

Challenges of the Modern World

By the twentieth century, industrialization—whether coal mining, logging, or other extractive industries within the region or factory jobs outside the region—forced countless Appalachian people to leave farms and abandon agricultural ways of life, which led to the steady decline of many regionally specific, rural traditions. However, since Appalachia’s population continued to be comprised primarily of people with ancestral ties to the region, some older Appalachian folkways have persisted into the twenty-first century, while other regional traditions have been consciously revived during the past several decades by younger generations of both natives and non-natives—groups that today recognize Appalachia as having produced one of the more distinctive regional cultures in the United States.

Studies of Appalachian Folklore

Holistic studies of Appalachian folklore and folklife include several volumes in the University Press of Mississippi’s *Folklife in the South Series*, each of which concerns the traditional culture of a specific Appalachian subregion: Montell (1993), Williams (1995), Olson (1998), and Suter (1999). The seminal collection of Cherokee folklore is Mooney (1992 [1900]). The various *Foxfire* books (twelve volumes: 1972–2004—for example, Wigginton 1972) offer general interest articles on numerous genres of traditional culture from Appalachia. *The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore* (seven volumes: 1952–1964), while covering only one state within Appalachia, documents a broad cross-section of the genres of folklore found across the region. There are many respected studies investigating specific genres of Appalachian folklore, including, for ballads, Sharp and Karpeles (1932); for regional occupational folksong associated with coal mining, Green (1972); for instrumental music, Conway (1995); for Appalachian dialectical speech, Montgomery and Hall (2004); for customary folklife, Crissman (1994) and Cavender (2003); for folk architecture, Glassie (1968); and for foodways, Dabney (1998). Two comprehensive historical studies of the region are Drake (2001) and Williams (2002). Important academic studies exploring issues in Appalachian cultural history include Shapiro (1978), Eller (1982), Whisnant (1983), McNeil (1995), Dunaway (1996), and Billings and Blee (2000).

Ted Olson

See Also Art, Folk; Ballad; Dance, Folk; Drama, Folk; Ethnic Folklore; Festival; Foodways; Regional Approach.

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Apparitions

Belief of the supernatural manifestation of the paranormal. Apparitions may include paranormal beliefs in areas such as ghosts, witches, wizards, vampires, aliens, phantoms, poltergeists, spirits, saints, demons, or angels. These beliefs are commonly communicated as ghost lore through the use of folk narrative.

Folklorists examine apparitions through the study of these ghost, or revenant, narratives, which include subjects such as inexplicable occurrences, spook lights, campus legends, and haunted places (most commonly a cemetery, haunted house, battlefield, or ship). These narratives are related by adults and children, of both the male and female gender in cultures worldwide. The reasons for why they are communicated, however, reflect a vast subject matter that includes but is not limited to: environment, culture, ethnicity, community, folk religion, belief system, or the individual. Revenant narratives have characteristics of being only slightly dramatic, having unfitting rational explanations, manifest for a specific reason, and have been firmly established in a particular place.

Unlike other folk narratives, the subjects of apparitions cannot be confirmed as either fiction or nonfiction, depending on what they are being communicated to reflect. In a folk religion, apparitions of the manifestations of a saint, an angel, or a spirit are meant to be interpreted as true and absolute. In another folk culture, such as the children folk group, the sharing of narratives of vampires, witches, and ghosts are a form of play, and are in this instance portrayed as fantasy, or as subjects for jokes or riddles. Some apparitions are seen as instances of applied folklore, for in many cases apparitions are used as reasoning for perplexing circumstances, such as the movement of inanimate objects or an inexplicable recovery from a terminal illness.

Aside from their appearance in folk narrative, apparitions can also be depicted in folk art. Artistic renditions of saints, religious icons, incarnations, and spirits are widespread subjects of folk art, seen in a variety of decorative art forms, such as the various portrayals of Jesus Christ in the Christian religions. Other examples include the folk art of the Vodun religion and related religions of Umbanda or Quimbanda, which depict various spirits and demons, incorporated into the folk practices of these groups.

Subjects of supernatural appearances have deep historical backgrounds, and many of these have been transformed from cultural memories into popular culture. In American folklore, for example, the secular holiday of Halloween has roots in both the Celtic festival of the dead, Samhain, and the Christian All Saints'

Day. Halloween today is a popular celebration associated with costume parties and ghost stories.

Krista Kroslowitz

See Also Evolutionary Theory; Religion, Comparative.

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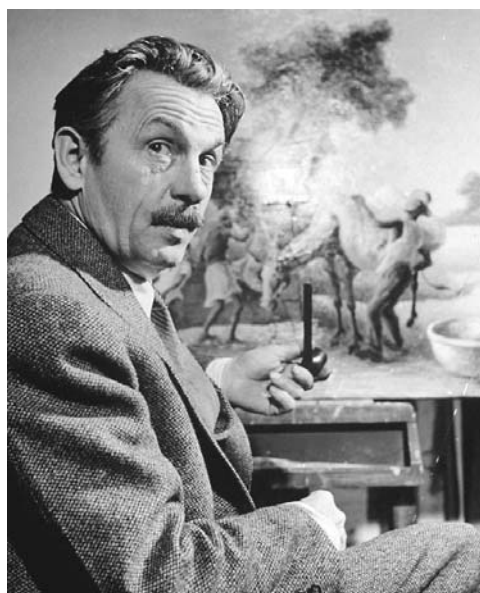
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Applied Folklore/Folkloristics

Using folklore or folklorists' methods, investigative techniques, and skills as a personal resource or to affect policy, develop technology, or alter social, cultural, and economic conditions. Applied folklore is often contrasted with academic research and teaching folklore courses per se (although these might include a degree of advocacy and intervention). Typical venues are museums, the entertainment industry, arts agencies and parks and recreation departments that document and present folk traditions, the health and social welfare professions, cultural resources management programs, community redevelopment agencies, human resources development departments and management consulting firms, and education programs.

Early folklorists did not hold full-time appointments teaching and researching folklore, owing, in part, to the absence of chairs of folklore studies and degree-granting programs. They documented, interpreted, and presented folklore avocationally or as a resource in their professions. Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm, the compilers of celebrated collections of household tales, practiced law; the latter also published a study of ancient Teutonic legal customs. Employed by his government as a circuit physician, Elias Lönnrot (whose dissertation concerned magical medicine of the Finns) traveled to remote areas where he met "seers" ("wise men" and "wise women"), as well as masters of narrative poetry from whom he collected beliefs and songs that he recast into the *Kalevala*, which became the Finnish national epic. Poets Sir Walter Scott and John Greenleaf Whittier and writers Joel Chandler Harris and Zora Neale Hurston, among others, collected and interpreted folklore and drew upon it for their literary creations. Hungarian composer Béla Bartók based many scores on folk music. The American

Portrait of Thomas Hart Benton. (Time Life Pictures/Getty Images)



regionalist Thomas Hart Benton included folksong themes, fiddling, and other Ozark folklife in his murals and lithographs.

Folklore has long been manipulated for political purposes. In 1630, the king of Sweden decreed that ancient traditions be documented; as records of the way of life in ancient times, they would demonstrate to older European countries that Sweden, too, had a long history. The Antiquities Council, founded in Stockholm in 1666, implored the local clergy to gather old narrative songs because they contained “much truth about the heroic deeds of the forefathers.” Nineteenth-century nationalism motivated some of the folklore collecting in Germany, Finland, Ireland, and other countries suffering from outside cultural or political domination. In the twentieth century, Nazi Germany exploited the Aryan myth, Soviet Russia promoted folklore for its propaganda value, and Communist China attempted to indoctrinate children through folksongs, dance, and puppetry. On the other side of the coin, labor and civil rights activists and social reformers have used folklore to educate, agitate, and rally people to a cause.

Folklore was also used to help immigrants adjust to their new social environments. Jane Addams established Hull House in Chicago in 1889 as a place where people could gather to celebrate familiar holidays, dress in traditional costume, sing the old songs, and reminisce. In 1900, she created a labor museum with tools and products, photographs, and demonstrations. By showing similarities in crafts and work, the museum linked various nationalities, revealed a continuity in experiences from the native country to the new, and bridged the gap between immigrants and their children. Phyllis H. Williams, who interviewed and observed more than 500 Italian immigrants over eleven years’ time, published a volume in

1938 on southern Italian folkways in Europe and the United States. A handbook for social workers, medical personnel, and teachers, the work surveyed both Old World and New World traditions and advised the reader on how to ease the adjustment of families and individuals. In the 1940s, Rachel Davis DuBois, a social worker, utilized folklore in schools to increase understanding among people of different ethnic backgrounds. Dorothy Mills Howard created child development programs through which children became aware of the folklore process and how it operated in their lives and communities.

Public agencies in the United States have played a role in applied folklore, from the Bureau of American Ethnology (founded in 1879) to the Archive of Folksong (established in 1928 and renamed the Archive of Folk Culture in 1981) and the Works Progress Administration's Federal Project Number One, which operated between August 2, 1935, and August 31, 1939. The latter included folklore documentation, festivals, or publications by the art, music, theater, and writers' projects in addition to the Historical Records Survey. During World War II, the National Research Council created the Committee on Food Habits, dedicated to the belief that studies of ethnic and regional customs revolving around food were crucial to solving nutritional problems.

More recently, three federal organizations have been active in folklore applications in the United States. The Office of Folklife Programs at the Smithsonian Institution sponsors research, exhibits, films, and publications as well as a Festival of American Folklife (established in 1967), defending this annual event for its advocacy on behalf of cultural equity. The National Endowment for the Arts' Folk Arts Program (founded in 1974) funds local traditional festivals, workshops, demonstration programs in schools, and other activities that present folk art and artists, in part to help perpetuate traditional art forms, skills, and knowledge. This organization also provides the first years of funding for folk arts coordinator positions in arts councils; by the late 1980s, fifty of the fifty-six states and territories and several cities had hired people to document and present traditional arts, performers, and craftspeople. In 1976, the American Folklife Preservation Act established the American Folklife Center as the country's first national agency devoted to the study, preservation, and presentation of folk culture. Located in the Library of Congress, the center provides technical assistance, carries out model documentary projects, and organizes public forums in the name of cultural conservation.

The folksong and folk dance revivals of the 1950s and 1960s brought many to the halls of academe seeking information, resources, and training. Some became scholars; others continued to pursue careers in the arts as singers, musicians, puppeteers, dancers, choreographers, directors of folk dance troupes, radio programmers, creative writers, journalists, editors, filmmakers, and consultants to the entertainment industry (advising on costume, dialect, sets, and scripts). Folklore studies complement and supplement arts training by providing: knowledge about varied forms

and examples of folklore through time and space; familiarity with bibliographical tools and archive resources; and an understanding of the historical, social, cultural, and biographical contexts in which folklore is generated and perpetuated. Arts practitioners enrich their repertoires, tend to be more concerned with authenticity, and usually add an interpretive, educational dimension to entertainment.

Many folklorists find employment in public agencies such as state arts councils, city cultural affairs divisions, and parks and recreation departments (sometimes referring to their specific field as “public folklore” or “public sector folklife programming”). They locate and document the behaviors of individuals who are the active tradition bearers. Through films, tape recordings, festivals, exhibits, publications, and interpretive programs, they honor local artists and performers, educate the public about the community’s history and culture(s), and foster intergroup communication and cooperation. Apprenticeship programs and venues for showcasing artists help perpetuate the traditions. Attention to folklore in these agencies democratizes support of the arts and enlarges the public served.

The same is true for museums of art, history, and science and industry in which folklorists have found employment as curators and directors. Those trained in folklore studies know their way around archives and historical collections, can establish the traditionality and cultural representativeness of objects, and are able to discern and communicate the meanings, symbolic significance, and functions of the things that people make. With their interviewing and observation skills, folklorists can elicit information from resource persons while locating and presenting craft demonstrators for educational programs. Oriented to the documentation and study of traditional, expressive behavior in everyday life, folklorists are well suited to working in living- history museums and community cultural centers, and they can help prevent or overcome elitist tendencies in other museums. Their efforts and emphases assist established residents in valuing their heritage, newcomers in understanding what daily life was like for early settlers, and tourists in comprehending the social and cultural forces shaping the region.

Increasingly, teachers, curriculum planners, and educational consultants are seeking training in folkloristics and utilizing folklore materials and folkloristic methods. Effectiveness in the multicultural classroom requires that a teacher communicate with those whose heritages differ from one another’s and from the teacher’s own; the teacher must also discover what the various traditions are and uncover fundamental similarities. Learning to do folklore fieldwork develops these skills. Student fieldwork projects promote experiential learning, nurture the enjoyment of discovery, and can help reduce intergroup stereotyping and dissonance as individuals learn about each other. The sharing of folklore in the classroom establishes common ground between the student and teacher, among the students, and between generations when class assignments involve the student in conversations with younger siblings or with parents and grandparents.

Incorporating comparative folklore into the curriculum internationalizes students' studies. Folklore provides a sense of immediacy, capturing students' attention and interest as it confers a sense of identification with the subject. In language arts, exposure to folk poetry and narratives (or analysis of the students' own verbal art) can help students learn about meter, rhyme, structure, motivation and character, and symbolism; the classics then become less formidable. Having students in composition classes write about their own folklore, community traditions, or the lore of colleagues provides interesting subject matter and turns the writing exercise into a meaningful and rewarding experience. In history and social studies, students who document family traditions or record narratives, songs, and descriptions of customs from community members gain insights into historical events and processes that impersonal textbooks cannot convey. Investigating modern legends, beliefs, and rituals can help the student understand more fully the impact of social and technological change.

Folklorists in the helping professions, such as medicine and social work, supplement and complement the knowledge and skills of coworkers because their training prepares them to document and interpret relevant traditions historically, culturally, and behaviorally. Folklorists seek to understand the overlooked knowledge, especially by learning the traditional idioms and modes of thought from which it arises, posing questions aimed at understanding the patient's point of view and describing it sympathetically. They advise medical personnel about health beliefs and healing practices that are traditional either cross-culturally or within a given group, suggesting ways to integrate folk medicine with scientific medicine and to translate concepts from one system of care to another. Practitioners in health and social work who study folklore increase their ability to understand patient or client behavior and enhance their delivery of services.

Folklorists in human resources management and organization development provide understanding and assistance in meeting the needs of the multicultural workplace. They also document and analyze the meanings and significance of stories, rituals, metaphoric language, and customs in an organization, including such functions as enculturating members, expressing values and assumptions, serving as coping mechanisms, or fostering community and cooperation. Through the use of fieldwork techniques, knowledge of folklore forms, and an understanding of what traditional symbolic behavior expresses and does, those trained in folkloristics are better able to uncover the sources of interpersonal tensions, to help improve communication and leadership, and to contribute to strategic planning by ascertaining and assessing the organization's culture.

Environmental planning, rural and economic development, and tourism benefit from folklorists' involvement by utilizing their knowledge of ethnic and regional subcultures, their abilities to document and interpret traditions, and their inclination to work with local communities to help them define and achieve their own

goals. The cultural resources management aspect of environmental planning involves inventorying cultural resources, determining their significance, mitigating the effects of intervention, and presenting and interpreting community traditions to others. Social impact assessments entail investigating how a proposed development (such as an industrial park, a shopping center, or a recreational facility) will affect communities, including the impact on the communities' traditions, quality of life, and collective ethos. Folklorists understand the basis of community identity in common traditions; they also are among the most adept at discovering attitudes, values, and tastes, using folklore as a diagnostic tool and information source. Their knowledge of craft traditions, vernacular architecture, and local customs is crucial to rural development and tourism; they can clarify what aspects of culture need to be preserved or developed, and they are able to assess how alternative economic interventions will strengthen or weaken and enhance or disrupt the local culture and community.

Folklorists also use their knowledge and skills to develop programs for and with senior citizens, in art therapy and urban planning, and as archivists, librarians, photographers, marketers, public relations specialists, and program officers on humanities councils, to name a few fields. Some are involved in technological developments. By the late 1960s, specialists in artificial intelligence were experimenting with computer programs that mimic human storytellers, using folklorists' research on narrating, dialect use, and the structure of folktales and myths. Concerned about the demise of the apprenticeship system in modern industry and seeking to develop computerized expert systems for use in training, some firms have employed folklorists to interview older designers and craftspeople to document their procedures and understand their processes of conceptualization.

Various conceptual, logistic, ethical, and political issues surround applied folkloristics. Issues of authenticity and context confront museum curators, festival organizers, and teachers who present folk artists or experts. Interpreters or recreators of folklore are practiced performers but not necessarily representative of the cultural heritage. Demonstrating to the public may discomfort local artists and craftspeople, and it removes the art or craft from its natural context in family and community. Spotlighting esoteric traditions and highlighting differences may reinforce stereotypes. For some, "cultural conservation" suggests artificially sealing off some elements of culture from further development—in effect, embalming them. There is also concern about the deliberate staging of cultural pluralism by organizers of festivals serving as cultural brokers who select, manipulate, or sometimes alter the cultural symbols and strategies of a group through their decisions about which segments or members of the community to invite as participants and what traditions to include or exclude. Because public sector folklife programs have such broad or vague goals as furthering public awareness, appreciation, and support of traditional culture, it has proved difficult

to develop adequate measures of their success. The fact that so much programming in the folk arts depends on a few governmental agencies (and the decisions of their directors) raises concerns over the exercise of power and control. Folklorists in the private sector must guard against misapplication or abuse of their findings. Efforts at cultural resources management or economic development may disrupt some segments of a community while benefiting others. Folklorists have resolved some of these issues through the use of a partnership approach or participatory action research in which the impetus for programs or inquiry originates with the community or organization, representatives of all interests are included, and collaboration occurs to understand the problems and to plan and take action.

To conclude, applied folklore has evolved from a simple and sometimes simplistic use of folklore forms and examples per se to the discipline of applied folkloristics with a body of theory, methods, and techniques that establishes research problems and hypotheses along with a code of ethics. From the inception of their field two centuries ago, folklorists have focused on populations often ignored by others (children, the elderly, various ethnic groups), providing a forum through publications, exhibits, festivals, and films for underrepresented groups or individuals and their traditions. Some folklorists have become activists on behalf of particular groups (such as Alice Fletcher, the first woman president of the American Folklore Society [1905], who studied the lore of the Winnebago and Omaha and lobbied for the passage of federal legislation giving Native Americans greater control over their lands). Whether they work in academe or applied fields, folklorists are trained to identify, document, analyze, and present forms and examples of traditional symbolic expression in which ordinary people engage in their everyday interactions. They appreciate these traditions and respect the bearers of them. They understand and can interpret the historical, social, cultural, and biographical circumstances of traditional behavior. With such skills, knowledge, and abilities informed by values and philosophy, folklorists are particularly suited to both pursuing theoretical research that increases understanding of the species and participating in applications that improve the quality of life and benefit the welfare of individual members.

Michael Owen Jones

See Also Occupational Folklife/Folklore; Organizational Folklore; Public Sector Folklore.

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Arab Gulf States Folklore

Gulf Arabs pride themselves on their cultural traditions and folklore, emphasizing the need to disseminate information not only to educate the young, but also to encourage cultural understanding between expatriates and locals. Folklore is literally the ways, beliefs, and crafts of the folk, which in the Gulf context translates to the Bedouin. However, much of the folklore associated with the Bedouin emerges as the foundation of nationalism within the Gulf's recently formed states. Common symbols, such as the falcon or date palm, decorate everything from house gates to government institutions to currency. Heritage centers bring to life key symbols, weaving stories of the past while demonstrating material culture: women weave tents and speak about life in the oasis, while men demonstrate falconry or traditional dances such as the sword dance.

Throughout the major cities of the Gulf states, cultural symbols in the form of public monuments dot major intersections and traffic circles, heralding the heritage of the region. In downtown Doha, next to the site of the new national library, stands a large pillar with a statue of an oryx (a type of gazelle), paying tribute to the state's wildlife and Bedouin past. Omani traffic circles display giant statues of everything from coffeepots and cups, which symbolize Bedouin and Arab hospitality, to Omani-styled chests, which are unique in the region and reflect numerous influences, including the presence of the Portuguese. Both Bahrain and Qatar have pearl monuments in Manama and Doha, respectively. Modern architecture also pays homage to the past through the incorporation of symbolic



Bedouin dancers perform the Arda, a traditional war dance using swords, in Abreq, Kuwait, 2003. (Getty Images)

elements. Numerous buildings are built in the shape of ships, recalling the importance of the sea. In Dubai, the famous Burj al-Arab (Tower of the Arab) hotel evokes the image of a ship replete with a white sail, while the new Etisalat (the United Arab Emirates [UAE] state-owned telecommunications company) building stands with its bow facing a major intersection. Likewise, wind tower motifs are also popular in new construction, branching off from the roofs of houses and other structures. With the convenience of air-conditioning, the wind tower is no longer needed for cooling but is instead used as a decorative architectural element. Many other symbols, including the *khanjar* (dagger), camel, *bukhoor* (incense burner), and *dhow*, enjoy popularity as a reference to tradition.

Pearls occupy a special place in local folklore because of the region's former pearl-diving industry. Pearls are considered items of beauty and value; some people also think pearls have mystical powers for healing or finding a lost love. Pearl diving demanded much strength and fortitude from the divers; they spent large periods of time away from their families, and the job itself was physically taxing. With a stone attached to his foot, a peg attached to his nose, and wax stuffed into his ears, the diver plummeted to the sea bottom, where he quickly filled a basket with shells. After a tug, the diver was then pulled to the surface, where the shells were emptied onto the boat (Gillespie 2006; Seery 1993). The *naham*, or performance leader, led the men in *fidjeri*, or sea-faring songs, particular to pearl divers. Punctuating the rhythmic songs were the drum and hand clapping. The songs provided the divers with motivation as they called out together, singing songs of their toil. People also

tell stories about the origin of the pearl. In Bahrain, parents tell their children that a mermaid's teardrop fell into an oyster shell and created the pearl.

Many folkloric traditions revolve around the safety of the individual and especially how to ward off evil spirits, or djinn, from oneself and one's family and community. Taboos and amulets protect those considered especially vulnerable (pregnant women, children, and the sickly). In the UAE, pregnant women wear amulets with verses of the Quran, which is thought to shield them and their unborn children from danger. Moreover, the pregnant woman and some of her family members observe a number of taboos such as avoiding looking at an ugly person or animal, lest the child develop a resemblance; being shielded from bad news; and not walking alone at night unless armed with an iron knife, which is thought to protect against evil (Hurreiz 2002, 86–87). Some groups treat a child for forty days with smoke from khatf, a seed that is thought to protect against the evil eye. The belief in spirit possession, or zar, is not in accordance with Islam, yet many people continue to believe that spirits can cause harm and take one's soul. Certain places are deemed especially dangerous; Oman's inner mountain area is reputed to be a place where djinn collect the souls of visitors.

Before the twentieth century, modern medicine was quite rare in the Gulf states, and thus people relied on four different types of folk healers: *al-mutabbib* (the traditional healer), *al-ashshab* (the herbalist), *al-daya* (the midwife), and *al-mutawwa* (the Muslim religious leader). At other times, others played minor roles. For example, the village barber might perform a circumcision, or other healers might specialize in animals. Everyone was expected to have a general knowledge of herbs and practices for the treatment of common problems such as coughs and diarrhea. However, when more serious ailments arose, it was time to turn to particular kinds of folk healers, who were considered specialists in different areas (Hurreiz 2002, 108).

Two commonly practiced forms of traditional healing were bloodletting (*al-hijama*) and curing by iron (*al-kay*). There are varying forms of bloodletting, from incisions, similar to surgical procedures, to minor procedures, where blood is not forced from the body. In curing by iron, the healer places a hot iron rod next to the afflicted area. This practice has similarities to branding, which is used to mark the ownership of animals (called *al-wasm*). Both bloodletting and curing by iron cured everything from backaches to whooping cough and are considered part of prophetic medicine, a body of literature that details the incorporation of medical practices within Islam (Hurreiz 2002, 108–109). Herbalists used the many available plants and perfumes to cure disease as well as to encourage good health, while midwives attended to gynecological disorders and obstetrics. Religious leaders were consulted for what would be considered problems of the mind and/or soul.

Rebecca L. Torstrick and Elizabeth Faier

See Also Arabian Nights; Ethnic Folklore.

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Arabian Nights

The Thousand and One Nights, in English commonly known as *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments* or, in short, the *Arabian Nights* or simply the *Nights*, was originally an Arabic collection of stories that has become an integral part of world literature ever since its French translation (1704–1717) by Antoine Galland. Rather than denoting a specific book, the *Arabian Nights* imply a phenomenon, since the work is both anonymous and authored by many contributors over an extended period of time, and since its character as a shape-shifter has led to numerous differing versions in Arabic manuscripts and printed texts, as well as in European translations.

Textual History

The History of the Arabian Nights before Galland

European Orientalist research has brought forth various arguments for an Indian and/or Iranian origin of the collection that later materialized as the *Arabian*



The porter and the ladies from *The Arabian Night's Entertainment*, illustrated by Rie Cramer. (Arnold, Edwin, ed. *Oriental Fairy Tales*, 1923)

Nights. An Indian origin is suggested by the fact that Indian versions of the tales given in the collection's frame narrative, including the stratagem of telling tales to prevent death, predate the *Arabian Nights*. An Iranian origin may be surmised from the Persian background of the main characters in the frame tale (King Shahriyar and his brother Shahzaman, Sheherazade and her sister Dunyazade) and from the fact that the earliest-known references to the *Arabian Nights* explicitly mention a Persian-language predecessor. These references have been preserved in the works of Arab historian al-Mas'ûdî (died 956) and Baghdad bookseller Ibn al-Nadîm (died 995). Both authors state that the Arabic book *Alf layla* (*A Thousand Nights*) derives from an earlier Persian book named *Hezâr afsân* (*A Thousand Stories*). Ibn al-Nadîm also mentions details of the work's frame tale in that a king used to marry a young woman every day only to kill her the next morning, and that Sheherazade by telling him stories for a period of a thousand consecutive nights reformed him and finally convinced him to quit this bloody habit by showing him their child. The references do not, however, mention the actual content of those tales. This content is, albeit summarily, intimated by a paper fragment dating from the ninth century and preserving the first pages of *The Book of the Tale of the Thousand Nights*. Here, a certain Dinazad asks Shirazad (for Sheherazade) if she is not asleep, to tell her a story and give "examples of the excellencies and shortcomings, the cunning and stupidity, the generosity and avarice, and the courage and cowardice that are in man, instinctive or acquired, or pertain to his distinctive characteristics or to courtly manners, Syrian or Bedouin."

While none of the actual tales are quoted in the fragment, the description, only to some extent, matches the content documented in later Arabic manuscripts. Evidence for the physical existence of the *Arabian Nights* is found in the notebook of a Jewish physician who also sold, bought, and lent out books in mid-twelfth-century Cairo. The notice pertains to a book called *The Thousand and One Nights* and thus bears testimony to the fact that the collection's elaborate title as known today had come into use. The oldest preserved text of the *Arabian Nights* is contained in a three-volume Arabic manuscript that most probably dates from the middle of the fifteenth century. The manuscript, which was acquired and used by Galland for the first part of his translation, is fragmentary and contains the beginning of the *Arabian Nights* up to night 282, breaking off at some point in the "Tale of Qamar al-Zamân and Budûr." Besides this manuscript, fewer than a dozen Arabic manuscripts predating Galland are known. In addition to these, early Turkish translations of the work were available in the Royal Library in Paris when Galland prepared his translation.

Galland's Translation and Its Consequences.

Galland in his *Les mille et une nuits* not only translated but to a certain extent created the *Arabian Nights*. When the tales of the old Arabic manuscript he used

were exhausted, readers' enthusiasm demanded that he complete the work. At first, Galland's publisher without his consent published a volume containing tales translated by both Galland and his Orientalist colleague François Pétis de la Croix. Galland himself then took recourse to various other sources, including material from other manuscripts, some of which has not been identified. Even before, he had already integrated the tales of Sindbad. For some of the tales most popular in later European tradition, particularly those of Ali Baba and Aladdin, he is indebted to the performance of gifted Syrian storyteller Hanna Diyab.

Galland's creative and enlarged adaptation of the Arabic text was a tremendous success in Europe. It gave rise to a vogue of literature in the Oriental style and thus contributed to the rising phenomenon of Orientalism. Some of Galland's scholarly colleagues even tried to imitate his success, such as Pétis de la Croix, who published a collection named *Les mille et un jours* (*The Thousand and One Days*, 1710–1712), allegedly translating a collection copied from a manuscript in the possession of a Persian dervish, but in reality adapting a Turkish collection of tales from the Royal Library in Paris. In addition, Galland's translation furthered Orientalist studies in that scholars began to occupy themselves with the origin of the collection, its various tales, and the culture presented therein. Moreover, it initiated a search for complete manuscripts of the work that in turn resulted in complete manuscripts being produced, whether in the East, above all in Egypt, or in the West, where Arab scholars in Paris forged allegedly old manuscripts right before the eyes of their Orientalist superiors.

Scholarship has classified the Arabic manuscripts of the *Arabian Nights* into several groups, the most important of which was defined by French scholar Herman Zotenberg and has become known as "Zotenberg's Egyptian recension" (ZER). Other manuscripts with differing contents include the Wortley-Montague manuscript preserved in Oxford and the Reinhardt manuscript in Strasbourg.

Printed Editions and English Translations.

With the exception of the Breslau edition, ZER manuscripts formed the basis of most of the printed editions of the *Arabian Nights* prepared in the nineteenth century:

Calcutta I: Edited by Ahmad al-Shirwani. 2 vols. Calcutta, 1814–1818.

Bulaq I: 2 vols. Bulaq (Cairo), 1835.

Calcutta II: Edited by W. H. Macnaghten. 4 vols. Calcutta, 1839–1842.

Breslau: Edited by M. Habicht and H. L. Fleischer. 12 vols. Breslau, 1825–1843.

Bulaq II: 4 vols. Bulaq (Cairo), 1862.

While Galland's French version had previously served almost exclusively as the source of reference for translations into other European languages, the publication of the printed editions greatly facilitated the translation of the *Arabian Nights* from the original texts. The best-known English language translations

published in the nineteenth century are those prepared by Edward W. Lane and Richard Francis Burton. Lane's translation, published in three volumes in London (1839–1841), largely follows the Bulaq I edition.

While prepared by an excellent scholar of Arabic, the translation submits itself to Puritan Victorian morality by eliminating various objectionable scenes and even complete tales. Lane's translation is, moreover, supplied with profuse and often distracting ethnographic annotation, since he intended the book to be read as a mirror of Arabic customs. Burton's translation was published in ten volumes in "Benares" (London, 1885–1886). While profiting to a considerable extent from the previous limited English edition by John Payne (1882–1884), Burton took pleasure in employing archaic language and in stressing, rather than suppressing, any sexual undertones or explicit scenes to be found; in particular, his "Terminal Essay" is notorious for his predilection with sexual matters.

While the bulk of his translation is based on the Calcutta II edition, he later published a six-volume installment of "Supplemental Nights" (1886–1888) containing additional tales from other versions of the *Arabian Nights*. A third English-language translation was published by Powys Mathers (1937) based on the French version prepared by Joseph Charles Mardrus in sixteen volumes in Paris (1899–1904). Even though it has been reprinted numerous times until today, this translation is the least faithful to the Arabic original, as it contains numerous additions from a large variety of different sources, particularly in its later volumes. Meanwhile, the Mardrus version was widely acclaimed in France by famous writers André Gide and Marcel Proust and also contributed to the fame of the *Arabian Nights* in its English version. Since, according to modern critical standards, none of the available English versions of the *Arabian Nights* are satisfactory, Malcolm C. Lyons and Robert Irwin are currently preparing a new translation.

Characteristics

The various versions of the *Arabian Nights* differ in content, but particularly in their later parts, all of them contain both a specific frame tale and a largely identical initial set of stories. In the frame tale, Sheherazade tells her stories to the cruel king over consecutive nights. Sheherazade's stratagem of breaking off her tales at a critical point not only saved her life but also turned the frame tale into a powerful engine driving a potentially endless number of stories. Some of the earlier tales are closely linked to Sheherazade's own intention of saving her life by telling stories, such as the tale of "The Trader and the Jinnî," the tales told by the Qalandars in "The Porter and the Three Ladies of Baghdad," the tale of "The Three Apples," and "The Hunchback's Tale," including the tales of the Broker, the Reeve, the Jewish Doctor, the Tailor, and the Barber. In his programmatic essay on "Narrative-Men," Tzvetan Todorov has identified this device as one of the major individual characteristics of the *Arabian Nights*: to reveal who they

are, the characters relate their experiences by telling stories. In this manner, telling a story signifies life, and, in consequence, the absence of narrative signifies death. As the characters are “merely narrative” who must narrate to be able to live, their storytelling generates the overwhelming abundance of embedding and embedded tales in the *Nights*. The device of having characters within a tale tell their own tales on subsequent levels creates a labyrinthine structure that greatly contributed to the fascination of the *Arabian Nights*, particularly among Western audiences.

As a consequence of the frame tale’s narrative potential, and probably resulting from the fact that “complete” manuscripts of the *Arabian Nights* were not always available, the compilers of later versions incorporated tales of the most divergent categories, including folktales, fairy tales, romances, religious tales, didactic tales, fables, jokes, and anecdotes, many of which are culled from either classical Arabic literature or from numerous anonymous collections of tales. Research has classified those tales and their hypothetical origin or integration into several strata, including an Indian stratum, probably encompassing the “wiles of women” stories about extramarital sexual relations and some of the fables; an Iranian stratum, encompassing those tales closest to the European understanding of the fairy tale, in which wonder and magic occur on an unquestioned and natural level; a Baghdad stratum, encompassing tales of the Harun-cycle (see Harun al-Rashid) as well as jokes and anecdotes from the times of the Abbasid dynasty; and a Cairo stratum, encompassing Mamluk tales of deceit and roguery.

These strata cannot be clearly separated; the collection rather resembles a palace, one from whose ruins new buildings were erected at consecutive periods. Moreover, several originally independent tales or collections were at some point integrated into the *Arabian Nights*, such as the Persian *Sindbad-Name* (also known in the West by way of its Latin version *Dolopathos*), the tales of Sindbad’s travels (already integrated into a seventeenth-century Turkish manuscript), or the lengthy romance of ‘Umar ibn al-Nu’mân. Even some European translators could not resist the temptation to enlarge the repertoire of the *Arabian Nights* by adding tales from extraneous sources. Burton added, from an unidentified source, the jocular tale about a man whose breaking wind led to a new reckoning of time, and Mardrus exploited various works of historical literature as well as recent contemporary collections of folktales and fairy tales from the Arab world.

A major characteristic of the narrative universe presented in the *Arabian Nights* is the predominance of the ethical values of the merchant class, who probably constituted the major audience for oral performances of tales from the *Arabian Nights* in their indigenous context. This led Aboubakr Chraïbi to classify the *Arabian Nights*, in allusion to the widespread literary genre of “mirror for princes,”

as a “mirror for merchants.” Though the *Arabian Nights* is by no means a unified collection, its tales convey to some extent an image of social life in the Muslim world, particularly in Egypt in the Mamluk period. One should, however, beware of taking the *Arabian Nights* as an ethnographic manual, as was popular in Victorian England following Lane’s translation. In particular, the playful atmosphere of the *Arabian Nights* relating to licentious behavior in terms of sexuality or the consuming of intoxicating beverages and drugs rather than advocating a tolerant or permissive atmosphere expresses compensation and wishful thinking. Its enthusiastic reception in Europe in all likelihood is due to the rigorous social standards reigning there at the time.

The Impact of the Arabian Nights

The impact of the *Arabian Nights* on Western creative imagination can hardly be overestimated. Elements from the frame tale of the *Arabian Nights* were already mirrored in Italian Renaissance literature long before Galland, in Giovanni Sercambi’s *Novella d’Astolfo* (c. 1400), and in canto 28 of Ludovico Ariosto’s *Orlando furioso* (1516), suggesting the possibility of a transfer by way of oral tradition. With the tremendous success of Galland’s translation, hardly a major European writer of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries could avoid being in some way or other influenced by *Arabian Nights*. By way of recreations in oral performance or public reading from printed tales, many of which were published as separate chapbooks, the tales from *Arabian Nights* also reached the more illiterate strata of society, and some of its stories have since become stock tales of European folk literature.

In the twentieth century, many images and tales from the *Arabian Nights* form an integral constituent of European and world culture. The collection as a whole is regarded as the quintessential expression of well-being, a matrix similar to the European notion of Cockaigne (an imaginary land of great luxury and ease), with an added spice of (imagined) uninhibited sexuality. Popular imagery includes the number 1001, denoting an endless amount, the image of the jinnî who is released from the bottle and cannot be controlled anymore (from the “Tale of the Fisherman and the Jinnî”), or the wording “Open, Sesame” (from the tale of “Ali Baba and the Forty Robbers”). The three best-known tales from the *Arabian Nights*, namely “Aladdin,” “Ali Baba,” and “Sindbad,” have moreover gained fame as modern trade names for purposes that popular imagination would spontaneously link with their content: “Aladdin” serves as a trade name for bail bonds and Internet search engines, Ali Baba is probably the most famous label for “Oriental” restaurants in the West, and Sindbad is a common name for travel companies, particularly for single males.

Ulrich Marzolph

Aladdin

Son of a poor Chinese tailor's widow, the legendary Aladdin is one of the best-known characters of *The 1,001 Nights*. Like many other heroes, he has an unpromising beginning as a lazy good-for-nothing who is one day sought out by a magician to enter a cave of treasure. In particular, the magician wants Aladdin to bring him a copper lamp that lies within the cave. The magician gives Aladdin his signet ring as protection, and the boy enters the cave, eventually coming back to the entrance with handfuls of treasure. He asks the magician to help him out, but the magician fears Aladdin is trying to trick him and closes the boy into the cave. Here, Aladdin accidentally rubs the magician's signet ring, and a jinni ("genie") appears and helps him return to his mother. Aladdin returns as a much more useful member of society, still carrying the copper lamp. He discovers that there is a jinni in the lamp, who comes to his aid later in the story. One day when cleaning the lamp, Aladdin's mother releases the jinni within and their wishes are granted, allowing them to escape their life of poverty.

With the help of a jinni, Aladdin accomplishes numerous impossible tasks set by the sultan and marries the sultan's daughter, Princess Badr al-Budur. One day, the magician, having heard about the lamp and wanting it for himself, cleverly pretends to be giving away new lamps for old. The princess unwittingly hands over the magic lamp, and the magician is able to command the jinni of the lamp to abduct the princess and transport her to Africa. Assisted by the jinni of the ring, Aladdin pursues them and is able to rescue the princess and kill the magician.

This is the basic story familiar in one version or another to most people as 'Aladdin and the Lamp,' staple fare of pantomimes, storybooks, and animated movies, the majority of which portray Aladdin as Middle Eastern rather than as Chinese. Scholars have determined that the Aladdin story is a mixture of Asian and European elements.

The poor boy, often as initially worthless as Aladdin, unexpectedly developing into a hero is a near-universal theme of folktale. Many of the other motifs in the story are also widespread, including the discovery of a magic object beneath the ground, a magical lamp that grants wishes, magical transportation by air, and, of course, the happy ending. These elements have contributed to the longevity and popularity of Aladdin in many forms of cultural expression, including folklore, literature, theater, and film.

Graham Seal

See Also Arab Gulf States Folklore; Fairy Tale Heroes.

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Archetype

Word derived from the Greek *archetypon*, signifying the first stamp, pattern, or model.

As a term, archetype is instrumental in two major theoretical approaches to the study of culture: (1) the Finnish School employing the historic-geographic method toward reconstructing the original form of an international tale type (or other relatively intricate items of lore that exist in a variety of forms); and (2) Jungian analytical psychology. In the works of the Finnish School, archetype denotes the reconstructed first form argued hypothetically to be the original form of the item under scrutiny. The term archetype is also closely linked to the psychological postulates advanced by C. G. Jung. Jung proposed that a number of primordial images common to all individuals of a given nation or historical epoch and—to some extent—to any human being exist in the collective unconscious of the social group (race). These images are externalized (expressed) in the form of streams of intuitive notions, bits of common knowledge, or apprehensions recurrent to mankind. In this respect, the archetype is analogous to Adolf Bastian's concept of the elementary idea (*Elementargedanke*), which holds that certain thoughts may be generated independently by different peoples at various time periods due to the psychic unity of mankind. Jung labeled this phenomenon transcendental imagination.

By their nature, according to this reasoning, archetypes are preexisting determinants of mental/psychological experiences that render an individual disposed to behave in a manner similar to that manifested by his or her racial ancestors. Typically, archetypes are primordial potentials for generating thoughts, images, and emotions (to be differentiated from learned feeling, or sentiments). Archetypes exist only in the collective unconscious of the individual; they impose themselves on a person when the conscious mind is inactive and is generating no images, as during sleep, or when the consciousness is caught off guard, as in

telling impersonal tales. They tend to personify natural processes and to present them in concrete terms—god and devil, life and death, male and female, for example—a characteristic of mythological imagery. Less pivotal belief-characters (such as spirits, fairies, ogres, and dragons), as well as abstractions (such as good and evil) and individuals in the social group (or mother and father), also serve as prominent archetypes. In daily living, archetypes are experienced as emotions and mental images associated with such significant events in the life of a human as birth or death or with a stage in life (adolescence or becoming a man or woman, for example).

Of the many archetypes Jung designated, four seemed to him to be more recurrent, laden with emotional significance, and traceable directly to ancient myths of origins. Consequently, Jung considered them separate personality systems. These four are: the persona, the anima, the animus, and the shadow. The persona (or outermost aspect of personality) conceals the true self; it is the mask that an individual wears publicly and is comparable to the concept of role-playing. The anima is the feminine characteristics in the male. The animus is the masculine characteristics in the female. The shadow (or darker self) is the inferior, animal-like part of the personality; it is something primitive in our human nature. Yet, the most important archetype in Jung's system is the self; it comprises all aspects of the unconscious and is an integrative force that provides stability and unity to the structure of personality.

Thus, a cultural account of a hero slaying a monster (dragon) that had impounded water (Motif A1 111, "Impounded water"; AT 300, "The Dragon Slayer") would signify conflict between life and death, right and wrong, and so forth; meanwhile, a wager between truth and falsehood (Motif N61, "Wager that falsehood is better than truth"; AT 613, "The Two Travelers [Truth and Falsehood]") would be symbolic of conflict between god and devil, good and evil. Similarly, an elaborate folktale in which a youth sets out to learn fear (Motif H1376.2, "Quest: learning what fear is"; AT 326, "The Youth Who Wanted To Learn What Fear Is") and encounters many socially significant individuals and groups, of whom only one succeeds finally in teaching him fear, would be indicative of the struggle between individual and society; it is the struggle of a youngster with no independent social identity seeking to wrest his place in society (represented by parental authority) by going through the process (archetype) of individuation.

Hasan El-Shamy

See Also Historic-Geographic Method; Jungian Psychology; Monogenesis/Polygenesis; Psychological Approach.

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Architecture, Folk

Regional traditions in building. In the study of cultural traditions past and present, folk architecture has found its niche among academic fields that document, conserve, and interpret cultural heritage. Folk architecture, also known as traditional or vernacular architecture, values concepts based on enduring patterns that often express regional or ethnic personality. Tradition is the chosen utilization of older, agreed-upon, and sometimes transplanted ideas in a new thing. Though tradition is manifest in every sort of experience, it is the conservative, community-based tradition accrued over time and trial that provides the rootstock for the ordinary structures and landscapes that constitute folk architecture. Researchers interested in traditional building study all kinds of domestic, agricultural, industrial, and sacred structures. Like other expressions of cultural heritage, folk architecture has patterns and decorations that have evolved over generations of execution and variation.

When people build, they intend to build structures that look good, whether they are constructing a new house, a church, or a garden shed. “Style” makes the surfaces of buildings look good in the context of the expectations of the community.

Vernacular architecture operates in a system related to high-style design but separate from many of its pressures and goals. Traditional architecture continually changes, even if subtly and slowly, and one can chart the nuances of social and cultural history in the varieties of buildings and their revealing individualized details.

However, though change for the high-style designer means trying to forge beyond boundaries of popular taste, change in folk design occurs within the flexible boundaries of custom. An 1880s traditional farmhouse in Maine, Iowa, or California may sport a stylish Gothic dormer window above the front door to express the owner's participation in the popular culture of the day.

Folk buildings are not anonymous; their builders simply have not been identified. All buildings reflect the individual designer, builder, or owner's personality. To be conservative is not necessarily to be old-fashioned or resistant to fashions



Windmills in Pyrohiv, Ukraine, home to the outdoor Museum of Folk Architecture and Rural Life. (Valeriy Barishpolets/Dreamstime.com)

moving through the community. There are countless examples of conservative traditional builders who adapt to new technology and ideas if they fit with the customary view of what architecture should be like. For example, the owners of a late nineteenth-century farm on the moors of central Scotland built a stone house, byre (stable), and barn in a traditional manner but asked the masons to install a carved finial or knob upon the front peak of the barn's gable roof. Such finials, like the finials on chairs and presses, reflect the eighteenth century's deep shift to bring Georgian style and order to the small steading. The owners thereby acknowledged fashion while doing business as usual as thrifty farmers.

In the context of traditional architecture, style pertains to visual elements of decoration and ornament. Styles change in the context of popular design and taste, influenced by a small number of designers whose ideas are disseminated in the mass media. Houses may be based on folk ideas of suitability and at the same time be designs selected from catalogs, magazines, displays of prefabricated houses, or model houses in new suburbs. The range of domestic shelters the student of vernacular architecture studies runs from the archaeological remains of one-room, half-timbered houses in colonial America to the connected adobe rooms of a Native American pueblo in Arizona to a grand Gothic mansion of white wood along a big city boulevard to the small shotgun house of the sharecropper to the mobile home and tract house.

Makers of traditional buildings are craftsperson-builders or artisans who—like the carpenter who made roof trusses in Ste. Genevieve, Missouri, resembling those of medieval France—are bearers of the knowledge of how to build a new thing on the footings of folk tradition. Folk builders reuse parts of old structures

or entire structures as they expand and tinker with their landscapes and take advantage of local climate and terrain. Construction may depend upon locally available materials, but even builders in remote areas import construction materials when desired or needed.

Traditional builders acquire most of their skills through apprenticeship, practice, and emulation of respected models and artisans, rather than through classes at schools of design. Instead of being called an architect, the maker of a commonplace traditional building was and continues to be called a builder or contractor, craftsperson, bricklayer, carpenter, and so on. Special cases result in special names; the group of skilled stonemasons from northern Italy who settled and built in Paradise Valley, Nevada, were called “cement men” and “pic-à-pierre.”

One feature of folk design that differentiates it from high-style design is the degree to which the client and members of the community participate in the design process. Forms are often familiar. Neighbors understand what is being built and why. The contractor knows similar buildings; work is attuned to the needs of the client. People apply decorative details and variations to give the building special character.

For studies of diffusion and cultural connections, typologies continue to be useful. Typology—classification—is important because, on many levels, form and surface structure are important. Form is reasonably stable through time and different regions and gives the researcher discernible patterns with which to trace routes of diffusion and variation. Floor plan (horizontal layout) is important because form is relatively stable over time and scholars can use form to study cultural diffusion.

Looking for background patterns and comparative examples is only one of numerous approaches to the study of buildings as culture. We can learn about comparable buildings in other regions, communities, or countries; folk buildings vary regionally and culturally more than they vary chronologically through time.

In looking at building types, several elements can be documented and analyzed. In 1968, Henry Glassie implemented a three-part approach to typology, in which the elements form, construction, and use were employed to classify and identify different types of houses and agricultural structures with European parentage. In 1981, Howard Marshall, a student of Glassie's, added a fourth element, decoration (stylistic detailing), when analyzing folk buildings in the Little Dixie region of British Missouri. Other scholars concentrate on different elements, such as function or the decoration that overlays a structure. Although Glassie, a theoretical and methodological innovator, has also written about new and different areas of material culture research, his early books continue to be the basis for many studies.

The hunt for origins and paths of diffusion, the classic approach in examining folk architecture, usually leads to more questions. Some building types can be seen as successfully established; other types of structures simply do not take root in a new environment. We have yet to understand completely why certain

features of folk culture do not get carried to new places. For example, one of the oldest settings for people and their possessions, produce, and animals is a building type that comes in two basic forms in the British Isles and Europe—the longhouse and the housebarn. The longhouse has been built for hundreds of years in the British Isles, alongside separate house and byre farm steadings that developed in late medieval times. In this long, one-story building that is one-room deep, the spaces for the family, the dairy, the storehouse, and the beasts are lined up to form a row of rooms with special purposes. The longhouse or housebarn tradition is deeply ingrained in the shared cultural heritage of western Europe, Scandinavia, and the British Isles. However, though a number of distinctive European and British folk-building elements were carried to the Americas—seen most clearly and immediately in the prevalence of the “I house” type across British America—the longhouse or its continental cousin, the housebarn, was rarely situated in North America. Finding vast tracts of new land and forest, immigrants were quick to assert control, order, and ownership. One way of asserting control was to break apart and scatter the old European longhouse and housebarn over space into a series of buildings. Perhaps the saga of the longhouse—its interruption or rejection—helps illustrate the point that ethnic groups, even in substantial numbers, do not necessarily reestablish old and familiar patterns. People may adopt and adapt other forms of architecture when the new forms have a good fit with the character of the group’s sense of place and architectural preferences. One of the challenges of the folk architecture researcher is to try to disentangle the various vines of architecture and view architecture’s parts both as reflections of old folk ideas and as continually evolving new ideas as well.

One may investigate roles played by the Industrial Revolution and the factory system as factors in the processes of folk architecture. Shifts in technology brought changes in traditional building. The influence of pattern books and carpenter’s manuals in the nineteenth century is interesting in terms of the accommodations builders made and make still to new tools and techniques that become widespread nationally. Mail-order house plans for a “vernacular cottage” from a Sunday newspaper today provide a self-selected style that means much in terms of private values. Mobile homes (manufactured housing) sell fast in growing communities not only because they are relatively inexpensive and efficient but also because their interior spaces and their layer of “style” makes them livable to people. Prefabricated housing is a very old tradition in the United States; the dynamics of a production model speak to folk ideas, or the company loses business.

American folklorists who study folk buildings tend to study those of the colonial period through the mid-twentieth century. Most leave precontact Native American architecture to experts in archaeology and today’s built environment to scholars in American studies or anthropology. Yet the entire range of traditional buildings needs attention, and the increasingly complicated matter of ethnicity in

folk architecture is gaining importance in this as in every area of cultural study. Part of the success of folk architecture studies is due to the tendency of researchers to study built environments of ethnic groups, socially marginal communities, and remote places where little or no field documentation has been accomplished.

Sorting out the ethnic elements in a building or neighborhood can be a complex undertaking. All may not be what it seems. Some patterns in folk houses are embedded in time and are difficult to interpret. John Vlach has shown that the shotgun house, the narrow dwelling of African Americans in certain regions, likely resulted from the wedding of West African social space to Caribbean dwelling forms, transmitted to the American South in the processes of evolution in the colonial and early national periods. The shotgun house type was carried in people's minds and employed in many places when African Americans built their own houses, spreading outward and upward from the New Orleans, Louisiana, area, along riverways in the nineteenth century. In regard to rural Chinese communities in northern California, architectural historian Christopher Yip has shown us the complexity and rich symbolism in the construction and ornamentation of the interiors of frame buildings that were relatively simple in outward appearance. Sacred places (joss houses) in these communities carried minimal exterior ornamentation. A people suppressed by society and economy, whatever form the subjugation or manipulation may take, tend to express identity or ethnicity in private spaces—the inside of the dwelling, the garden plot behind, the altar, or the fireplace mantle.

Studying architecture gives entry into broader areas of behavior, so the land itself becomes our artifact. People live in environments and not merely in buildings. Landscape study is part of the folklorist's work as constellations of buildings in a community, valley, or region are seen in the frame of habitat and climate. Environment influences how folk buildings are thought of and built. In 1900, a Lowland Scottish coal-mining family arriving by train at a prairie village in north Missouri would have found no suitable stone for the "cottage" they know and want, so the Midwest's great hardwood forests would serve for the Scots, as for all, in the construction of a dwelling that in form and use might well have been identical to those in the home village.

One of the tools brought to the study of old buildings by scholars such as Warren Roberts, Henry Glassie, and John Vlach is intensive field research. Discovering and measuring ordinary, scruffy, and often derelict buildings up close is at the heart of our work. Photographing a barn from the road provides visual and structural information; spending the afternoon crawling through the dusty, smelly barn balancing tape measure, cameras, flashlight, and clipboard adds a level of intimacy that is helpful in a holistic reading of the structure in its distinctive place and time. So field research and its products—the measured architectural drawing, fieldnotes, and detailed photographic coverage—are integral components in the study of vernacular architecture.

Field study is fundamental because folk buildings have not been accorded the historical documentation that high-style buildings have received. Combined with the recording of the physical scene, including elements of the material culture of a farmstead or household and the landscape itself, we include oral interviews and discussions with knowledgeable citizens. To these field techniques can be added research in public records to establish property histories as well as research in historical photograph collections, ordnance survey maps, manuscript archives, museums, and a variety of libraries and repositories.

There always will be debates over terms when describing culture. Many folklorists divide culture into categories reflecting the degree of tradition found among cultural items in the categories. For example, some use a threefold division of folk, popular, and elite, as positioned in the literature by Henry Glassie in his pathbreaking *Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States* (1968). R. W. Brunskill posed two categories, vernacular and “polite.” We try to avoid culturally biased terms such as *primitive*, *naive*, *untrained*, and *country*. Actually, buildings, each exhibiting different shares of traditionality or progressivist design (style), can be located somewhere along a horizontal scale from conservative through commonplace to futuristic. Viewed this way, folk buildings are at the more conservative, community-oriented, and indeed restrictive end of the scale.

Folk architecture specialists frequently are involved with historical preservation groups and agencies in their local districts. More and more, preservation agencies will deal with traditional buildings and cultural landscapes, and the folklorist’s theories and practical approaches to the study of artifacts in context will be helpful in the coming years.

Traditional buildings comprise the bulk of the built environment globally and thus are significant within a broad context. Traditional buildings provide clues to understanding historical patterns and intersections between methods of design, form, construction, and function as people alter buildings to meet trends and changing economies while still finding ways to accommodate them to personal and aesthetic ideals. Folk architecture’s ideas and preferences are versatile. They endure and change, and they can be studied through field research and observation. From Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello to Abraham Lincoln’s log cabin to Elvis Presley’s Graceland, architecture is a crucial element in our lives. All of us shape our personal spaces to one degree or another according to deeply held traditions in our family or community or both. When we have choices, we select forms and styles in a dwelling that reflect a number of forces in us as people, whether these forces are obvious and objective—to impress our neighbors, mark success, or meet a limited budget—or obscure and subjective—for psychological comfort and safety, order, balance, predictability, or tradition.

Howard Wight Marshall

See Also Material Culture.

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Archives and Archiving

Repositories of material in formats ranging from transcribed fieldnotes through photographs and films documenting folklore, folklife, and related areas and the techniques used for the collection, preservation, and cataloging of such materials.

Unpublished material relating to folklore and folklife studies may be found in ethnomusicology, anthropology, oral history, local history, sociolinguistic, and cultural archives as well as in archives dedicated to the preservation of folklore and folklife documentation. There are over 200 such ethnographic archives in the United States and Canada alone. Some archives are specific to particular topics or genres, such as folksong or cowboy lore. Others may specialize in the conservation of particular formats, such as sound recordings or photographs. Still others provide for the care of all formats of cultural documentation in all genres. Researchers working in this field must learn to make use of all such archives, as they contain the primary resources for the study of folk culture.

The creation of the first folklore/folklife repositories coincided with the emergence of folklore as a formal discipline and was a manifestation of both the genesis of the field and the field's early concepts. By establishing archives, scholars declared the importance and vitality of their new field of study, ensured that the results of their research would be passed on to the next generation of scholars, and hoped to preserve examples of traditions they feared would disappear through industrialization and urbanization. As research in the field developed, the pragmatic necessity of creating safe storage for the growing collection of a particular researcher or institution often gave rise to the foundation of public archives.

All these motives probably contributed to the establishment of the world's first archive for collections of folklore. The Folklore Archive of the Finnish Literature Society was created at the same time as the society (in 1831) and opened its public quarters in 1888. Its first collections were those of Elias Lönnrot, the compiler of the *Kalevala*. This body of Finnish lore provided an inspiration to other collectors, who then added their materials to the collections.

The folklore movement in Europe was paralleled by similar efforts to preserve traditions in many parts of the world, resulting in the creation of archives devoted to the preservation of folklore. The establishment of archives became imperative with the development of new documentary technologies. As folklorists began to use fragile formats such as recordings, film, and still photography regularly in their fieldwork, they found that those formats required expert preservation, and they therefore established a number of special format archives for that purpose.

The first public archive dedicated to collecting and preserving folklore and folklife in the United States was established in 1928 at the Library of Congress. The Archive of Folksong was originally concerned with the preservation of sound recordings. Today, it is part of the American Folklife Center and has been

renamed the Archive of Folk Culture. It is a repository for all formats of ethnographic documentation.

Folklife archives often are research institutions as well as repositories, and their staffs initiate ethnographic research and compile the collected materials. Archivists also have found ways to sponsor or support fieldwork in order to add to their collections. Archivists at universities with folklore programs often encourage and preserve student collections. Some are able to provide training in fieldwork and collections management through internships. Others provide for the loan of documentary equipment, such as tape recorders, to collectors who then may place their documentation in the archive.

Folklorists often joke that in order to become an effective field-worker, one must learn everything there is to know. Folklife archivists must master the skills of a field-worker and those of archival science as well. Managing materials in fieldwork situations is practical experience for managing collections in an archive. But an archivist must be able to preserve and duplicate various media, which may entail such things as knowing the technical specifications for the preservation of audiotapes, the chemistry of different types of film, and the methods for conserving aging manuscripts. Folklife archivists usually are trained folklorists who have studied archival science or learned it through on-the-job experience. Some also have training in library science, history, or another related discipline; all should be familiar with computer networking and database construction.

Archivists first arrange a collection. When possible, mixed-media documentary collection materials are processed together in keeping with the collector's intent in compiling them. The documentary goals of the collector are a guiding principle in organizing and providing access to ethnographic documentation. This means that the better collections are documented and organized by a collector before they arrive at the archive, the more thoroughly the collector's purpose and method can be conveyed to researchers. Ideally, a collection arrives at an archive already arranged by the collector. If a collector fails to give the collection a clear order and it is no longer possible to contact the collector for further information (as is often the case with historical collections), the archivist must decide on an order. This frequently involves attempting to reconstruct the collector's purpose as much as possible in order to arrange the materials in a coherent way.

The next step is to preserve collection materials by housing them in protective enclosures or by duplicating them onto more durable media. Many ethnographic materials have finite life spans. The primary task of the archivist is to preserve the information the materials contain through duplication. Duplicates also can be used as reference copies so that the life of the originals may be lengthened. Funding is not always available for duplication, and the originals of sound and video recordings must be preserved because duplicates may lose signal with each generation. For these reasons, preservation care and storage for the original media

are generally needed as well. With manuscript materials, it is often desirable to preserve the original. For example, a paper disc sleeve from an instantaneous disc recording of Zora Neale Hurston made by Herbert Halpert, containing field-notes by the collector, has intrinsic value as an artifact to folklorists interested in the history of the various formats of documentary media. Many ethnographic media have finite life spans.

For documentary materials to be useful, the archivist must have the original technology used to play or read the item. Early recording equipment must be collected and preserved so as to duplicate cylinder, wire, and disc recordings. Early film, video, and computer technologies need to be collected and preserved as well.

Finally, the archivist creates tools to provide access to the collection for researchers. The most basic of these are catalog records on a computer database, collection inventories, and collection descriptions that provide a guide for readers. For modern collections, searchable databases often can be constructed using the field-worker's computer files. These access tools are another important means of providing links among the various media in mixed-media ethnographic collections. Even if photographs must be housed separately from recordings and manuscripts, all the different parts of the collection may be located and their relationships to one another explained clearly for researchers by means of well-written access tools.

Archives sometimes publish books or recordings of materials from collections, thereby providing access to a selected portion of their collections. Books or recordings created by other organizations from an archive also may be available. Today, archivists and publishers are exploring the possibilities of interactive computer duplicates of collection materials made available on a network or CD-ROM.

Whatever public products stem from collections in archives, the rights of the individuals documented in ethnographic work must be considered. The laws regarding rights to unpublished materials change frequently, and the interpretation of these laws is sometimes difficult. Archivists must stay abreast of these changes and also determine their own archival policies concerning the use of their materials. Generally, the archivist is responsible for obtaining permissions when the institution publishes or disseminates collection materials. When researchers publish archival materials, the responsibility to obtain permission falls on them. Field-workers often ask participants in their research to sign release forms giving them permission to use performances and photographs in their publications. Such permissions do not transfer to an archive. But should the collection become part of an archive, these permission forms provide a valuable source of addresses and phone numbers so that performers may be contacted in case materials are published.

Archives provide a fine training ground for folklorists and for future archivists. Field-workers may benefit from experience in collection management training so they may better care for the materials they collect, and aspiring archivists may find their best preliminary training in an ethnographic archive. Many archives

sponsor internships or provide classes for this purpose. Folklife, ethnomusicology, and cultural archives make it possible for scholars to explore the range and variation of traditions over time and to compare traditions across cultures and regions. The archive may be the first stop in a folklorist's preparation for field research or an additional, later step as questions arise during an ethnographic study. Any number of issues may be addressed in archival research: Other folklorists may have compiled collections on the same or a related subject, local historians may have collected materials that provide useful cultural background, or linguists may have documented language variations or examples of natural speech that may provide clues to the culture in question. The unique unpublished recordings, photographs, and moving-image materials found in archives can provide fieldworkers with indispensable cultural data to take with them into the field.

It is difficult to predict from the outset what useful information archives may yield, and archival research consequently proves most fruitful when approached with an open mind. It is advisable to prepare for a visit to an archive by doing preliminary reading and by contacting the archive ahead of time to obtain brochures and background information about collections.

Every archive will have its own system for retrieving information. Some archives have cataloged materials at the item level, so that song or narrative titles may be searched and retrieved. In larger archives, this level of detail often is not possible and collections can only be searched in more general ways. Researchers must allow more time for working with unpublished materials than with published works, as the organization, indexing, and descriptions of the collections are irregular. In addition, most of the research must be conducted in the archive, for unique materials usually cannot be removed for study. Duplication of materials is sometimes possible, depending on the restrictions of the collection or archive. Transcriptions of recordings are sometimes available for duplication, but not all archives are able to provide them. Transcriptions, furthermore, are often inaccurate or lacking in important information available in the original sound recording.

A general understanding of the history of cultural documentation and the constraints of ethnographic archiving can facilitate an archival search. Pioneers of ethnographic research were often pioneers of recorded sound as well. For example, folklorist Robert Winslow Gordon experimented with transferring cylinder recordings to disc recordings for archival preservation. Such experimentation with documentary and preservation technology continues to the present day.

The developing technologies worked changes on ethnographic techniques. Lengthy recorded interviews became a research method with the invention of the tape recorder. Earlier collections of folklore on cylinders and discs usually focused on collecting individual songs, stories, and other items of a length that fit on one side of the recording medium. Folklorists used their fieldnotes to add information about the selections recorded. A modern researcher seeking information about the

cultural background of songs sung in the 1930s, for example, may be frustrated to find that the collector of a historical ethnography turned the disc recording machine off just as the singer began to explain the provenance of the song or that only a few verses of a long ballad were recorded. But the rest of the information the researcher seeks may be jotted on the protective disc sleeve or painstakingly written into notebooks. Similarly, photographic documentation of culture changed as photography became less cumbersome and society became more accustomed to the camera. Researchers using historical collections need to become aware of what they can expect to find there and how to gain the most from the materials available.

Changing technology also affected archival practice. In the 1950s, ethnographers eagerly took up the new medium of reel-to-reel tape recording, allowing them to record long interviews, cultural events, and ambient sound without concern for duration. But these long recordings posed new problems for the archivist. Formerly, songs, stories, and other short items recorded on identifiable tracks on discs or cylinders could be readily cataloged. Interviews and other long recordings collected with tape recorders could not so easily be broken down and cataloged by item. In addition, as tape recording became inexpensive and tape recorders became increasingly portable and as the number of scholars in the field increased, the quantity of recorded folklore documentation contributed to archives became overwhelming. Increased use of photography and videotape added to the large bodies of ethnographic documentation that folklife archivists now needed to preserve and make accessible.

Today, folklore archives often can only catalog collections at a general level. Archivists typically rely on the fieldnotes, photograph logs, and audio- or videotape logs of the folklorists who created the collections they house. Researchers may be startled to find that materials available through the 1950s have been carefully cataloged (complete with song titles, references to individual performers, and cross-references to other collections) but that the more modern archival holdings are far less accessible. Researchers doing work with modern collections will need to examine manuscripts of tape logs and fieldnotes of collectors to determine which recordings will be most useful to their study. Fortunately, in the 1980s, many field-workers began using computers in the field. Computer-readable fieldnotes and logs can be entered into archival databases to create searchable collection information. As technology provides field-workers with better methods of managing their collections, they will be able to donate more accessible documentation to archives, making work with the collections far easier for both archivists and researchers.

The possibilities for data retrieval created by computers are causing many ethnographic archivists to change their methods of cataloging materials. In the past, concern for the care of various documentary formats caused archivists to break up collections by format: recordings might go to one repository or storage

facility, and photographs would go to another. Modern use of computers is helping archivists to create cross-references to materials stored in different environments so that the different media from the work of one ethnographer can be brought back together for researchers to use. Modern archivists are going back to old collections and reexamining how they were cataloged to provide more comprehensive access in the future.

Archivists today must keep abreast of the ever changing technologies of modern ethnography, while learning about new ways to preserve materials from older collections. For example, early recordings and photographs are deteriorating to the point that they must be duplicated, quite possibly for the last time. Modern technologies of digital recording and scanning may provide a method of preserving the most information possible in those preservation duplicates. This new technology is still developing, however, and the stability of the various formats of digital preservation is a modern area of archival discussion. Digital technology is being used in the field as well, so archivists must learn about the preservation needs of the various digital formats and to make sure that they have access to equipment to read those formats.

The future of folklife archives may extend far beyond archival walls. Collections may become available to researchers through the Internet and other online information services. These far-reaching developments in ethnographic archiving were described in the 1994 report on the state of the discipline by the Archiving Section of the American Folklore Society:

Historic collections once broken up by format can now be reunited for the researcher by means of digitized versions of the sound recordings, photographs, and texts linked together on a multi-media server or CD-ROM. Online communications are making it possible for archives to share their collection finding aids and catalog records with the world. A new standard cataloging format for multi-format collections, Mixed Materials MARC, makes possible standardized cataloging of ethnographic collections as whole intellectual works, rather than as separate media. . . .

The computer and information revolutions provide marvelous new possibilities for compiling, preserving, and providing access to ethnographic collections. However, these new options come at a time when ethnographic archives are losing funding and staff and are often unable to support the technology that makes these techniques possible. Archives need computers to build the databases, staff trained in using them, and staff to develop catalogs and other access tools.

Ethnographic archivists today may look forward to providing more complete access to their collections and to reaching scholars globally in a way never before

possible, if they receive the intellectual and material support needed to realize these goals.

Stephanie A. Hall

See Also Academic Programs in Folklore, International; Academic Programs in Folklore, North American; Applied Folklore/Folkloristics.

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Art, Folk

The creation of aesthetic forms that emulate or reproduce techniques and designs taught, learned, and displayed primarily in situations of informal interaction. Much of what people make in everyday life and the procedures they employ in making these things are derived from the behavior of predecessors and peers. With time and repetition, these objects and behaviors become pervasive and commonplace. When they do, they are thought of as traditional. Rooted in the past and associated with particular groups or communities, they are called “folk” because of the continuities and consistencies they exhibit in form and design, materials, or techniques of manufacture.

Art entails the creation of aesthetic forms, that is, products or performances capable of being perceived by the senses, acting upon people’s feelings, and being judged according to standards of excellence as well as personal preference (taste). In principle, folk art comprises both non-utilitarian objects (such as paintings and sculpture) and useful products (crafts and architecture), as well as dancing, singing, and music making. Many researchers, however, limit folk art to material culture. Some restrict it further to ornamentation, decorative designs, and sculptural forms lacking utility. Others include useful objects that may elicit

aesthetic responses in the course of making and using them, such as unadorned but well-designed chairs or clay vessels, iron or wooden implements, baskets, duck decoys, musical instruments, fishing flies and lures, and customized cars.

Most folk art belongs to ordinary, day-to-day experiences: the way people decorate their homes and work spaces, dress or adorn themselves, create altars and ornaments or other objects for holidays, prepare and serve food, and craft such things as quilts, furniture, pottery, rugs, clothing, toys, gifts for friends, and paintings of special or memorable events. Some people fashion particular things as an occupation or preoccupation, becoming noted in their communities as, for example, carvers, weavers, needlelace makers, boat builders, chair makers, stonemasons, or makers of headstones and grave markers.

Many non-utilitarian creations display the virtuoso's skill. One person makes highly detailed miniature chairs, sofas, and rocking horses from discarded soft drink cans. Others fashion amazingly lifelike dolls from corn husks or dried apples and small figurines from concrete. Some build elaborate birdhouses with fancy trim, carve chains from matchsticks, and construct larger-than-life animals or small-scale windmills as yard decorations. Certain Native Americans in California and Mexico weave decorated baskets no larger than a fingernail.

Objects intended for practical use also exhibit skill and mastery of technique and even great ingenuity and virtuosity. Technical excellence in carving a paddle or wooden buoy, weaving a blanket, preparing a meal, building a haystack or boat, or setting stones in a fence without mortar suffices to evoke admiration. One or more formal principles (unity, harmony, rhythm, balance) will likely be evident, and the product will serve its purpose with distinction. For example, a rocking chair with a deeply curved back, sculpted armrests to enhance comfort, and legs at just the right angle to the rockers so that a slight breeze will set the chair in motion is a joy to use.

Folk art has been studied from four perspectives. One perspective views forms and examples of folklore as artifacts because they have histories. Hypothesizing that many examples of traditional objects hark back to earlier eras, some folklorists have conceptualized folk art as survival, continuity, or revival. Survivals are objects and behaviors known to have been more common historically or more compatible with former norms rather than with present norms. Living-history farms, open-air museums, and pioneer villages typically associate folkways, crafts, and arts with the past. Colonial Williamsburg (Virginia), Upper Canada Village (Ontario), Skansen Open Air Museum (Stockholm), the Welsh Folk Museum at St. Fagan's (Cardiff, Wales), and other sites consist of restored or reconstructed buildings and period furnishings, tools, and utensils, as well as role-playing interpreters in costume who discuss life in the past, demonstrate skills, and answer questions.



Clay sculpture of a Pueblo Indian storyteller, Cochiti Pueblo, New Mexico. (National Geographic/Getty Images)

Numerous exhibits and publications also point out the durability of tradition and the continuity of attitudes, behaviors, and objects. Tourist markets perpetuate the making of things for which there once was widespread local use. Ethnic display events perpetuate traditional foods, dances, and crafts from the Old Country. Activities such as decorating homes, donning costumes, coloring eggs, creating shrines or altars, and building floats during holidays all help to define events and make them special. Taking part in traditions creates a sense of continuity and connectedness with others. Sometimes, people revive or revitalize forms and designs, such as the making of storytelling dolls among Pueblos, pottery production in rural North Carolina, or lei making in Hawaii. Motivations range from self-esteem to financial benefit and community redevelopment.

A second perspective views folk art creations as describable and diffusible entities. Folklorists establish genres, such as textiles, metalwork, and ceramics, in addition to subgenres (pottery, for example, can be further categorized on the basis of purpose or use—cream pitchers, butter jars, and milk crocks—or according to glazes, such as salt, lead, and alkaline). Researchers also configure types and subtypes from the many examples of houses, barns, outdoor bake ovens, chairs, garments, rugs, wooden clogs, sickles, harrows, and foods, among other forms. Questions asked about the distribution of types and subtypes leads to mapping, illustrated by Swedish, Austrian, and other European folklife atlases. Recognition of widespread examples of what seem to be the same design, technique, or form raises questions about origins. Although folklorists attribute some designs to polygenesis or multiple origins (for example, variations of a

multihooked, swastika-like motif), they hypothesize that most similarities result from monogenesis (single origin) with subsequent diffusion through space and time as people travel or migrate. Procedures for tracing origins, changes, and stability are called the historic-geographic method.

A third orientation considers folk art creations to be aspects or manifestations of culture. Researchers seek to establish what other elements of culture art correlates with and how and why. Religious carvings or paintings and the colors and designs of baskets or pots sometimes parallel patterns and values in the oral literature, music, and philosophy of a society. Art may express social status. Residents of some Newfoundland outports put handhooked rugs with asymmetrical designs in their parlors where hierarchical relationships between themselves and privileged guests dominate. They place rugs with symmetrical, repetitive designs in the kitchen, where they entertain friends on an egalitarian basis. To compete for passengers and gain a modicum of wealth and status, Filipino jeepney drivers paint their vehicles with colorful scenes, elegant names, and provocative sayings (sometimes sexual), hang crocheted curtains reminiscent of those in village homes, and decorate their vehicles with rosary beads, holy pictures, and miniature altars. Folklorists postulate that some art conveys norms of behavior, validates or reinforces culture, and also provides escape from social pressures through fantasy or wish fulfillment.

A fourth perspective treats folk art as behavior. Some researchers hypothesize panhuman symbols such as the egg as life force or seek evidence of psychic processes (projections of unconscious archetypes such as the anima, animus, and shadow figure). Others have inferred unwritten laws or rules that people intuitively learn and unconsciously follow while creating aesthetic forms. For instance, food encodes social relationships and events (apparent in the structure of a meal); designers of folk houses or other objects employ an artifactual grammar in composition and construction. Some folklorists study art in a biographical context, examining repertoire, content, and style in relation to events and experiences in the maker's life. Others explore the unique situation in which a traditional object is formed, observing the impact of personality, customer influence, feedback, and reinforcement as well as uncovering the multiple meanings attributed to the object and its creation.

Aesthetic forms have instrumental effects. Some people artfully arrange linens in a cabinet, flowers on a table, nuts and bolts in containers, kitchen utensils in a drawer, or jars of homecanned goods on a shelf (by type and color of food). Ordering delimits a form, making it separable, recognizable, and accessible. Technical excellence in tools, furniture, pottery, and baskets enhances their utility and maximizes efficiency in use.

Art also has hygienic value. Many people create aesthetic forms during critical junctures in their lives or in times of anguish or turmoil (illness, retirement, marital

problems, loss of a loved one). Physical expression helps objectify complex, unconscious, or vague feelings and issues. Doing something rhythmic and repetitious when troubled tends to calm, free the mind, or unlock emotions. Once produced, forms can symbolize achievement, garner praise, and increase self-esteem. Creating memory paintings, applying craft skills learned in youth at a later point in life, or making things in traditional ways with or for others can comfort through symbolic connectedness.

Art triggers aesthetic experiences. A positive response involves physiological reactions such as muscular tension and release along with a heightened awareness of form, the subordination in importance of other stimuli, and the suspension of time. The percipient likely feels a sense of unity with the object and with others. Immersion in pleasurable activities can help resolve tensions and reenergize a person.

Since no society has been discovered without traditions or aesthetic forms and experiences in everyday life, these behavioral tendencies appear to be inherited predispositions in human beings. If so, then folk art may be crucial to the adaptation of the species and survival of individual members.

Michael Owen Jones

See Also Craft, Folk; Material Culture.

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Arthurian Lore

Traditional narratives and motifs, attitudes, and beliefs associated with Arthur, his court, and his followers. The legend of Arthur was one of the most productive themes of medieval literature in Western Europe. Grounded in popular beliefs in the Celtic-speaking regions of Great and Little Britain—primarily Wales, Cornwall, and Brittany—Arthurian tales were adapted first by Norman, Anglo-Norman, and French authors and then by others, especially German and English. Arthurian lore is preserved mainly in literary narrative genres—histories, *vitae sanctorum* (saints' lives), prose and verse romances, poems—and its stories and episodes are therefore found at some remove from their primary oral forms.

Nevertheless, though the legend takes many forms in various cultural contexts, it has some salient features. There is a core Arthurian entourage and a number of characteristic types of adventure (hunts; quests; journeys to unknown regions; combats with monsters, giants, hags, or with other knights). There developed an Arthurian ethos of service and magnanimity centered upon Arthur's court. But the two themes that caught the imagination of writers and of their audiences (leaving aside the related but independent Merlin and Grail legends) were the abduction of Arthur's wife Guinevere and, especially, Arthur's final defeat, death, and prophesied return. These became the enduring features of the legend, which developed on the one hand into one of the great tragedies of world literature and on the other into a symbol of renewal and restoration.

Early Fragments of Legends

The earliest Arthurian texts derive from Wales and are written in Welsh or Latin. In these Arthur assumes a range of roles: he is variously termed hero, warrior, king, emperor, or simply leader. The ninth-century *Historia Brittonum* (History of the Britons), written in southeast Wales and often attributed to Nennius, has two stories of Arthur in a section describing some of the *mirabilia* (wonders) of Britain. Both seek to explain the names of features in the topography of south Wales, and it is possible that the Arthurian associations are secondary. One explains the name of a spring in present-day Herefordshire, Llygad Amr, "The Eye [i.e., fountain] of Amr [or Anir]," now Gamberhead, by identifying it as the spot where *Arthur miles* (Arthur the warrior) killed his own son Amr. Amr's grave, a tumulus, is nearby and cannot be accurately measured.

Although this son is named again in a later Welsh romance, he does not appear to be a traditional character, and he seems to have been created from the place name. In this instance, a common motif may simply have been given an Arthurian context.

The other wonder is Carn Cabal (now Corn Gaffallt), a stone atop a cairn above the Wye valley in Builth, which bears the footprint of Arthur's dog Cabal (Cafall,

Merlin

Master magician, prophet, and poet first appearing in the Arthurian romances in the twelfth century, though said to have lived many centuries earlier. Merlin's considerable presence in Celtic legend, literature, and popular culture is due to his pivotal roles in the Arthurian romances, which are themselves the products of an extensive intertwining of myth, tradition, and literary refinement. Celtic and medieval traditions, especially those of Wales, Ireland, and Brittany, include stories of a prophetic wild man of the woods. In particular, the Welsh version of this story about an aristocratic poet of the sixth century, Myrddin, is perhaps the most likely source of the name and character of Merlin. In the 1130s, with his fanciful *History of the Kings of Britain*, scholar and early popularizer Geoffrey of Monmouth gave the Arthurian stories the basic shape in which they have continued. Here, Merlin appears as prophet and wizard, a role that Monmouth extended (and to some extent contradicted) in his later *Merlin* (ca. 1150). From around 1200, French treatments of Merlin and other aspects of Arthurian romance appeared, often mingled with local traditions and further influencing the development of the romances in Britain. Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* (1485) presented the defining shape of the English-language versions of the romances, which are the basis for most of the considerable subsequent Arthurian treatments and which establish Merlin in his most familiar modern role as portrayed in fiction, film, and Broadway musicals.

In addition to—though usually independent of—these many literary treatments, Merlin makes occasional appearances in folklore. In the Tom Thumb tales, for example, he helps a childless couple bear a child, Tom himself. Merlin also appears in the ballad 'Child Rowland' as a magical helper in the quest to rescue the daughter of Arthur from the underworld, or fairyland. There are local legends concerning Merlin in those areas of England that cultivate a connection with the larger Arthurian romances, such as 'Merlin's Cave' at Tintagel, and there are some faint echoes of a tradition that Merlin was born on the Île de Sein off Brittany. Many of these traditions may owe their origins and survival more to the needs of the tourist trade than to the beliefs of local populations.

Considerable scholarly and not-so-scholarly research has been, and continues to be, carried out regarding Merlin and his important roles in the Arthurian romances. From a folkloric point of view, he is generally considered to be a literary refinement of the common folktale character of the magician or wise man. This figure, either male or female, often occupies an ambiguous space between good and evil, helping or hindering in sometimes whimsical ways and also often displaying many of the characteristics of the trickster.

Graham Seal

in modern Welsh orthography), impressed upon it during the hunt for the boar Porcum Troit. This familiar explanation of a peculiarly marked stone is linked to another common motif, for though the stone may be removed it always returns to its original location. The Arthurian association provides a more specific context.

Cafall is Old Welsh for “horse,” and as the name of Arthur’s hound it reflects the gigantic size of the dog and, by implication, of its owner. These two stories are the earliest examples of a widespread element in Arthurian folklore, the use of Arthur’s name to identify topographic features. In 1113, Hermann of Tournai noted Arthur’s Chair and Arthur’s Oven in the West Country, and there are scores of later examples throughout Britain. Nevertheless, it cannot be assumed that every Arthur’s Seat, Quoit, Bed, or Stone had an onomastic tale attached to it, though they are certainly evidence of the popularity and magnetism of Arthurian associations.

The Earliest Surviving Welsh Tales

The hunting of the boar Porcum Troit (named *Twrch Trwyd* or *Trwyth*, in Welsh) by Arthur and his men was, however, a well-established tale. It forms a major part of the eleventh-century Welsh story “How Culhwch Won Olwen” (*Culhwch and Olwen*). *Twrch Trwyth* is said to have been a king transformed into a swine for his sins. Between his ears are the shears and comb that the hero Culhwch must obtain to shave his future father-in-law, the giant Ysbaddaden, before the wedding feast. The hunt takes Arthur, who is Culhwch’s kinsman and helper, and his men from Ireland across south Wales to the Severn valley and thence along the Cornish peninsula until the boar is driven off the cliffs of Land’s End and his magic implements snatched away. Hunts of magic animals, boars and stags especially, are frequent in Celtic legends, often as a means of leading the hero to an arranged tryst or enchantment, but the tale of *Twrch Trwyth* is of a boar hunted for its own enchantment and for the capture of magic talismans (though into this narrative have been interwoven a host of onomastic elements).

Culhwch and Olwen, the earliest extant Arthurian story, has other characteristic Arthurian episodes: journeys to free prisoners and to gain treasures; combats with monsters, giants, and witches—all in a magical, supernatural world. Although they have been brought together within a single narrative about winning the giant’s daughter, no doubt many if not all of these adventures had an independent existence. In addition to the hunting of *Twrch Trwyth* (one of two boar hunts found in the tale), *Culhwch and Olwen* contains at least two other quests that belonged to earlier traditions: the first of these is the release of Mabon son of Modron, originally divine beings (the *Maponos* and *Matrona* whose names are found on Romano-British altars), from his prison in *Caerloyw* (which may mean “shining fortress”), in Gloucester. The second is the expedition to Ireland to win the cauldron of *Diwrnach* the Irishman. The two quests echo a ninth- or tenth-century Welsh poem, “The Spoils of *Annwfn*,” apparently spoken by the archetypal bard *Taliesin*. The poem recalls a disastrous expedition undertaken by Arthur, in his ship *Prydwen*, and two other shiploads of men to *Annwfn*, the Welsh otherworld—variously called here the Glass Fortress, the Fairy Fortress,

and the Fortress of Intoxication—from which only seven men returned. The allusions to the features of the otherworld are similar to those found in early Irish literature, but the purpose of the voyage was to free a prisoner, Gweir, and to win the richly ornamented cauldron of the head of Annwfn; kindled by the breath of nine maidens, its peculiarity was that it would not “boil the meat of a coward.”

The same cauldron, now that of Dyrrwch the giant, is listed elsewhere as one of the thirteen treasures of Britain, all of which appear to be, in origin, otherworld talismans. It seems likely that Diwrnach’s cauldron in *Culhwch and Olwen* is another version of the same story, one that seems to have been a common type: of expeditions to win otherworld treasures—even if, in *Culhwch and Olwen*, Ireland has replaced Annwfn as the site of the cauldron. Taliesin is not usually one of Arthur’s followers, but a number of other characters named in the list in *Culhwch and Olwen* reappear in another early dialogue poem in which Arthur, seeking entrance at the gate of a fort, is made to declare the worth of his men. What follows is a catalog of heroes and warriors—pride of place being given to Cai (Kay) and Bedwyr (Bedivere)—and a series of allusions to their exploits against human enemies and supernatural monsters and hags. Another poem describes the heroism of Emperor Arthur in a human battle. Even more allusive are references to Arthur in the Welsh Triads of the Island of Britain. The general outlines of the persona of Arthur remain unchanged, but there are hints of an extensive lost Arthurian literature.

Arthur in the Saints’ Lives

Supernatural combats are portrayed in a negative way in some saints’ lives of the twelfth century. In these renditions of combat in saints’ lives, written in Latin but using Welsh and Breton traditions, Arthur, often *quidam tirranus* (a certain king), now fights but fails to slay dragons. He challenges his rivals, no longer giants but monks or hermits. No longer victorious, he is discomforted and ridiculed. He is not heroic but avaricious and jealous. The nature of the Arthurian adventure has not changed, but the narrator has; rather than a writer of heroic poetry, the author is a cleric presenting his story to reflect the viewpoints of the saints, Arthur’s rivals from ecclesiastical folklore. The saint challenges Arthur to win not his kingdom but, rather, the loyalty of Arthur’s followers; this he accomplishes by overcoming Arthur and all he stands for. In making Arthur the villain of choice, the authors are acknowledging his importance; in this inverted sense, the *vitae sanctorum* are evidence of the same Arthurian lore as the early Welsh poems and *Culhwch and Olwen*.

Most of these episodes may be no more than conventional composed stories in which Arthur fills the slot of the stereotyped villain, but the *Life of Gildas* (ca. 1130), by Caradog of Llancarfan, has two episodes that appear to be genuine fragments of Arthurian lore. One concerns the long-standing enmity of Arthur

and Hueil, Gildas's brother; this rivalry also appears in the writings of Gerald of Wales and survives as a Welsh folktale at least as old as the sixteenth century. The second is the earliest account of the abduction of Arthur's wife (called Guennuvar by Caradog and generally known as Gwenhwyfar in Welsh): Melwas, king of *aestiva regio* (the summer country), carries the queen to Glastonbury, which the author calls *Urbs Vitrea* (Glass City). After a year's search, Arthur learns that she is a captive in Glastonbury and besieges the city to win her back. Gildas intervenes to have Gwenhwyfar returned to Arthur peaceably. The fact that the hero saint outshines Arthur by restoring Gwenhwyfar without a fight demonstrates that this particular version of the story is steeped in clerical values. Yet the abduction theme recurs constantly in Arthurian literature: in an obscure Welsh dialogue poem, in the *Lancelot* of Chrétien de Troyes (where the abductor is Meleagant and the rescuer Lancelot, her lover), and in later romances.

Geoffrey and Other Twelfth-Century Treatments

In Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain* (c. 1138), the queen's infidelity with Arthur's nephew Modred (in Welsh, Medrawd) and the latter's treachery are the cause of the final battle of Camlan, where Arthur is killed. Geoffrey created a potent mix of Welsh legend and tradition, classical and contemporary Latin writings, and creative imagination to present Arthur, the European emperor. Beneath this portrayal can be found some nuggets of genuine tradition: Arthur's sword Caliburnus (Excalibur), forged in the otherworld; Prydwen, his shield (not his ship, as in "The Spoils of Annwfn"); his wife and companions. Arthur fought the giant Ritho, who claimed his beard for his cloak of pelts (as Arthur had shaved the beard of Dillus in *Culhwch and Olwen*), and the obscene giant of Mont-Saint-Michel. Making Modred play the role of Melwas may be Geoffrey's error, and the battle of Camlan may not have been the result of any enmity between Arthur and Modred, but that the battle was the traumatic catastrophe of the Welsh Arthurian legend seems clear in the light of allusions found in the Triads, *Culhwch and Olwen*, and poetry. It became the focus for related incidents and developed its own group of traditions. Geoffrey claims that Arthur was taken to *Insula Avallonis* (the Isle of Avalon) to be healed of his wounds, a circumspect allusion to the belief in his eventual return. In his poem *The Life of Merlin*, Geoffrey developed the theme of Arthur's passing after Camlan, and his description of the "island of apples," ruled over by nine sisters who recall the nine maidens of the poem "The Spoils of Annwfn," and of the healing powers of Morgen, the chief of them, accurately reflects Irish and Welsh descriptions of the otherworld.

One of the Welsh "Stanzas of the Graves" (in the Black Book of Carmarthen) merely states that a grave for Arthur would be a wonder of the world, presumably because he had not died. But Geoffrey's contemporary William of Malmesbury, writing in 1125, is clearer, stating that "the grave of Arthur is nowhere to be seen,

and that ancient songs prophesy his return,” a belief that was given powerful expression when a near riot erupted in Bodmin, Cornwall, because some visiting monks were foolish enough to voice their doubts, according to the 1113 account given by Hermann of Tournai. Other twelfth-century writers, including Henry of Huntingdon, Gerald of Wales, and Étienne de Rouen, refer to this belief, which was to become the most abiding piece of Arthurian folklore. The earliest narratives of the king’s survival, those of Geoffrey of Monmouth and Wace, tell of Arthur’s passing to an otherworld island to be healed of his wounds and to await the hour and occasion of his messianic return. A more popular form of the theme is the cave legend of the sleeping lord. The earliest of these stories is related by Gervase of Tilbury in his *Otia imperialia* (Imperial Pastimes, ca.1211), which locates the cave in Mount Etna, Sicily, but a sixteenth-century Welsh chronicler provides the earliest evidence locating the legend in Wales, at south Cadbury.

Romance Traditions

Some familiar Arthurian themes are found for the first time in French romances. Arthurian stories, and perhaps an Arthurian legend as a frame of reference and context for them, were clearly well established in early and medieval Britain, as the narratives and allusions found in Welsh and in Latin attest. Arthurian heroes, stories, and ambiance apparently had a particular appeal for Normans in England, Wales, and Brittany, and these were transmitted to the French and Anglo-Norman cultural environments where Arthurian romance, verse, and, later, prose flourished, but it cannot be assumed that either the plots or all the episodes contained in the romances have a Welsh or other Celtic origin or that anything more has been borrowed in many cases than a traditional Welsh or Breton personal name. Wace, in *Roman de Brut* (Chronicle of Brutus, 1155), is the first to refer



A fourteenth-century manuscript illumination of *A Tournament of the Knights of the Round Table* before King Arthur and Queen Guinevere from Chrétien de Troyes’ *Romance of King Arthur*. (Gianni Dagli Orti/Corbis)

to the Round Table, established to prevent discord over claims of precedence at court and about which “Britons tell many wondrous tales,” he claims. No such tales, however, have survived.

Stories of Arthur’s begetting and boyhood may have been an element in his legend, but the celebrated incident of the Sword in the Stone, whereby Arthur’s claim to royal leadership is confirmed when he alone is able to withdraw a sword from a block of stone, occurs first in Robert de Boron’s *Merlin* (early thirteenth century). But French Arthurian romance has types of tales that can be more easily paralleled in Celtic stories. The most common of these are the hunt of the white stag, the transformed hag, journeys to enchanted castles and forests, magic fountains and mists, quests for wondrous objects, and the wasteland. These “Arthurian commonplaces” derive from Celtic mythological themes that may or may not have been associated with Arthur in their native, primary forms but that were part of the totality of Brythonic narrative themes and motifs that together with Arthurian elements gave medieval Arthurian romance its particular flavor.

That Arthur and some close companions—Cai (Kay), Bedwyr (Bedivere), Gwalchmai (Gauvain, Gawain)—were popular folklore figures is clear. Stories about them can be retrieved, complete, or in allusions. What is more debatable is whether this Arthurian lore was so many individual pieces or whether they existed within a legendary frame. Most Arthurian stories center on widespread motifs—combats, monsters, witches, and the like—and they are, therefore, movable. But the fixed elements—including the abduction and loss of Guinevere, the battle of Camlan, the death and return of Arthur, and an ethos of service found even in *Culhwch and Olwen* and the *Life of Cadoc*—suggest that one can refer to an early Arthurian legend. Whether any of this has a historical basis is irrelevant. Much of what is said of Arthur, even in the Latin chronicle texts, is expressed in terms that are recognizable as popular themes and motifs of myth and folktale.

Brynley F. Roberts

See Also Arthurian Lore; Hero/Heroine, Folk; Legend.

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Asian American Humor and Folklore

In the study of folklore, humor—as it appears in *blasons populaires*, jokes, and jocular tales—has been researched as a part of verbal lore. Folklorists have collected and indexed such lore in order to understand geographical diffusion of motifs, cultural patterns in manners of telling, and individual performance styles, as well as to conduct psychological and contextual analyses that explore socio-cultural implications embedded in the humor. Because humor can reveal a perceptual boundary between originator and target, it provides a rich locus for researchers to examine the ways in which one group perceives itself from the inside out, while judging others from an outside perspective.

Ethnic humor highlights characteristics of targeted ethnic groups deemed distinct to those groups by others. These range from physical and behavioral traits to cultural elements such as food, clothing, beliefs, customs, and speech, all subject to exaggeration for the purpose of ridicule. Overemphasized or distorted, these characteristics are developed into ethnic stereotypes (the bumptious Jewish American mother, the garlicky Italian American, the fried-chicken-eating African American) that underscore the boundary between originator and target, which maximizes the humorous effect at the expense of the target's otherness.

In American humor culture, it has been customary for minority groups to embrace ethnic characteristics previously put forth as stereotypes by others, so as to turn the tables for their benefit. Self-deprecation in humor is often regarded as a means of self-empowerment, and ethnic groups such as African Americans, Jewish Americans, and Norwegian Americans have employed this strategy in order to claim for themselves stereotypes previously advanced by others. The difference between being ridiculed by others and ridiculing oneself is enormous. Through self-ridicule the originator exhibits confidence in qualities that may be perceived by others as evidence of inferiority. In this way, an ethnic group cultivates a sense of ethnic pride and solidarity. Employing humor, a minority can challenge social judgments and biases projected by the majority, and confront them with the minority's viewpoints in order to expose the majority's shortsightedness (Oring 1992).

Asian American humor has won little recognition in academia. *New Directions in American Humor* (1998), edited by the renowned humor scholar David Sloane, includes not a single article dedicated to Asian Americans. The *Encyclopedia of 20th-Century American Humor* (2000) contains entries for minority groups such as "African Americans," "American Indians," "Hispanics," and "Jews," but none for Asians or Asian Americans. And it was only recently that *Studies in American Humor*, the journal of the American Humor Studies Association, began to feature articles devoted primarily to Asian and Asian American humor. Frustration over

the lack of scholarly attention given to minority humor spurred John McNally to compile *Humor Me: An Anthology of Humor by Writers of Color* (2002), which does contain a few selections by Asian Americans.

Such underrepresentation is not surprising because historically Asian Americans have contributed to American humor culture more as targets of mainstream caricature than as humor producers. From the Chinaman in Cal Stewart's "Uncle Josh in a Chinese Laundry" (a classic "No tickee, no washee" scenario) to Long Duk Dong in the film *Sixteen Candles*, the image of Asians (and Asian Americans) in mainstream America has typically been that of the goofy and incompetent foreigner.

But the current is shifting now that multiple Asian Americans have emerged as humor producers. Margaret Cho and Bobby Lee, both Korean Americans, are at the forefront of Asian American humorists, while others are following in their wake as standup comics, developing their own performance styles and routines. A pivotal moment in the history of American humor was the victory of the Vietnamese American Dat Phan in the first season of the comedy competition television series *Last Comic Standing*.

As have those from other minority groups, Asian American comedians have adopted the tactic of lampooning majority-prescribed ethnic characteristics. For example, speech accent is a primary source of ethnic humor because it is one



Comedian Margaret Cho performs at the Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival in Manchester, Tennessee, June 10, 2010. (AP/Wide World Photos)

particularly prominent characteristic of ethnic groups, and Asian American comedians frequently employ accent-switching in their stage performances. In her standup act, Margaret Cho tells anecdotes drawn from her experience as a first-generation Korean American, often imitating her mother by employing a speech pattern characteristic of Asian immigrants, with incomplete sentences, missing articles, an inability to distinguish “l” from “r,” and the omission of words’ terminal consonant sounds.

Asian American comics’ onstage accent-switching conveys something more than its purely phonological features. Many Asian Americans still experience being mistaken for immigrants by non-Asians, despite their native English. That Asian-looking people must have come from other countries is a common mainstream misconception offensive to Asian Americans. Thus, when Asian American comedians engage in accent-switching, they draw a distinction between Asians in America and Asian Americans. Switching between native English and stereotypically accented English allows Asian American comedians to demonstrate that they are native speakers of English, and at the same time that they find Asian accents as comedically fertile as do non-Asians.

An effective use of such accent-switching launched Dat Phan’s opening performance on *Last Comic Standing*, in which he introduced himself as an archetypically goofy foreigner by speaking in a heavy Asian accent, then a moment later astonished the audience by proclaiming in perfect English his ability to speak the language. In this instance, Phan debunked not only the common misconception but also the all-too-frequent mass media portrayal of Asians.

Comedians adopting accents in their humor delivery differs from actors adopting accents for their typecast roles (e.g., Pat Morita as Arnold Takahashi in the series *Happy Days*, Gedde Watanabe as Long Duk Dong in *Sixteen Candles*). Such roles in mainstream entertainment are created for the majority, and are designed to fit existing stereotypes such that the characters remain within the majority’s perceptual comfort zone. Although the ability to feign accents is considered part of an actor’s craft, many Asian Americans find it offensive that Asian American actors must play immigrants by faking Asian-immigrant accents, because this simply reinforces the majority’s perception of Asians as foreigners. On the other hand, stand-up comedians can employ this skill to deliver their viewpoints on this condescending perception. For example, Henry Cho (a Korean American comic from Tennessee) sometimes intensifies his own Southern accent to parody rural Southerners. Russell Peters (an Indian Canadian comic active in the United States) regularly mocks multiple Asian accents, and in the television show *Comedy Now!* compares the sound of white Canadians to that of donkeys. When comedians adopt accents they exhibit their competence in standard English, and through humor remind us that white people too talk funnily.

Other examples of majority-prescribed ethnic characteristics challenged by Asian American comedians include the following:

1. “Asians” are incompetent in American-style humor: Chinese American Eliot Chang closes a show by acknowledging the probable doubts among his Asian fellows about his ability to make the majority laugh.
2. “Asian” males are not masculine: Japanese American Paul Ogata jokes about his inability to grow a full beard.
3. “Asians” are poor drivers: Half-Filipino American Jo Koy exposes the illogic in the notion that the Japanese could design and produce the best cars, yet be unable to maneuver them.
4. It is difficult to tell “Asians” apart: Henry Cho recalls losing his father in a crowd on a visit to Korea.
5. “Asians” necessarily embrace their Asian-ness: biracial K. T. Tatara counters the majority’s expectation that he should be able to speak Japanese simply because he is half Japanese.

Asian American comedians tackle ethnic stereotypes so as to bring fresh perspectives to mainstream perceptions of their racial and ethnic groups. When re-seasoned to Asian American tastes and served to the original projectors, jokes about ethnic stereotypes become charged with new meanings. Stereotypes that once reflected the majority’s exoteric view of Asians and Asian Americans are redefined to communicate to the majority the esoteric Asian American opinions of those stereotypes. Thus minority comedians challenge the majority’s erroneous social assumptions in order to counterattack with their minority viewpoints.

Some comedians assume more of an activist role. The biracial performance artist Kate Rigg uses standup comedy, singing, and poetry to advocate for, among other things, women’s rights and gay marriage. As vocalist for the performing group Slanty Eyed Mama, she sings “Rice, Rice, Baby”—a takeoff on Weird Al’s song of the same title, itself a parody of Vanilla Ice’s debut—to criticize American society’s Eurocentric perceptions of the Asian and Asian American community. Rigg is especially assertive in her disapproval of the way in which Asian women are portrayed in the mass media as exotic objects of desire, something that has grown into a phenomenon called “Asian fetish.”

While some Asian and Asian American women believe that “Asian fetish” works to their advantage, others take offense because it reflects a view of Asian women as submissive playthings (the China doll, the geisha girl). As a self-styled “fierce Asian gangsta poet,” Rigg declaims that not all Asian and Asian American women play goody-goody Asians, because “there’s a whole other world in

the hearts of these Oriental girls” who do not conform to the stereotype concocted by mainstream America.

Margaret Cho also works political statements into her standup show. Well known as an advocate for women’s rights and gay rights, Cho often rants about social injustices that she attributes to the Republican government. She recounts that during the George W. Bush administration she was condemned by conservatives for stating that although the president was not Hitler, “he *would* be, if he applied himself” (*Assassin* 2005). For this she was inundated with hate mail that, rather than denouncing her political stance, attacked her personally on the basis of her perceived nationality and sexuality. To such a remark as “Go back to your country, you fat dyke!” Cho replies, “I can’t go *back* to my country because I was born here; I am already *in* my country,” so as to criticize the majority’s tendency to lump Asians and Asian Americans together into a single category (“Asians”), and its inability or unwillingness to distinguish between Asians in America and Americans of Asian descent. For comedians like Cho, humor is the platform that allows them to deliver political statements and social critiques.

A tamer brand of humor can be useful for educational purposes. The Minnesota-based Hmong comedian Tou Ger Xiong visits schools as a diversity-education consultant to perform stand-up comedy and tell stories about his early life in Laos and Thailand, migration, and experiences growing up in America. Switching between English and Hmong, he exhibits competence in both American and Hmong cultures and confidence in his ability to find humor in life’s hardships. The Hmong are still underrepresented in the Midwest despite the size of their population, and racial discrimination against them is a grim part of everyday reality. For minority children it is encouraging to hear a public figure recounting personal experiences to which they can relate: coping with the trials of growing up a young immigrant child, being greeted with ethnic slurs such as “Chink” and “Gook,” acing the dilemma of having to be American at school while trying to be Hmong at home, having to fend for himself because his parents neither spoke English nor understood what he was going through due to not having grown up in America themselves. Immigrant and minority children need to learn how to balance mainstream culture with their household cultures, as they often discover that their cultural values are incongruent with mainstream norms. Comedians like Tou Ger Xiong enlighten minority children on the importance of embracing their own backgrounds, while teaching majority children about the experiences of their new neighbors and the diversity of people’s lives.

For ethnic humor to be effective, it is necessary that both producer and audience share an awareness of the differences between majority and minority in the perception of ethnic characteristics, and it is because of this prerequisite that studying humor helps folklorists to understand the ways in which group characteristics are perceived, and group identities constituted. In contemporary American

humor culture, minority comedians frequently practice the principle of self-projected ethnic humor: countering exoteric ridicule with esoteric reinterpretation thereof. In this regard, the twenty-first century is witnessing a sea change, as more and more Asian Americans enter show business as comedians. Ultimately their self-produced ethnic humor communicates to mainstream America that the viewpoints and life experiences of Asian Americans are as varied as those of other groups. In their humor, boundaries are drawn between whites and Asians/Asian Americans, and furthermore between Asians and Asian Americans.

The future of the Asian American contribution to American humor is promising, yet some sensitive issues still linger. Often embedded in humor are caricature and discrimination; hence humor historically has aided in disguising hatred, hostility, and disdain. Regardless of Asian American comedians' mainstream success, it is important to recognize that not every Asian or Asian American appreciates ethnic humor. When Asian American comedians mock Asian accents, it might be understood merely to pillory immigrants behind the shield of humor. Asian American comedians often proclaim that they caricature races and ethnicities so as to illuminate prejudices pervasive in the mass media. Yet not everyone concurs with the practice of using racial and ethnic humor to tackle prejudice, because of its potential to perpetuate stereotypes—or worse, to legitimize them.

Perhaps the most publicized example of such an intra-ethnic conflict is the criticism Margaret Cho received from the Korean and Korean American community for her once-much-anticipated sitcom, *All American Girl*, because that community did not approve of her as an ideal representative (Cho 2001, 130–131; Cassinelli 2008). Many Asian immigrants do not favor American-style sarcasm and self-deprecation as means of self-revelation, and not all Asian Americans believe in using such humor to gain the understanding of the mainstream. Asian Americans have long struggled to differentiate themselves from Asian immigrants so as to prove to non-Asian Americans that they are indeed Americans, while Asian immigrants have striven to survive in a foreign land, no matter how relentlessly they are belittled by the majority. And when “Asians” are labeled a model minority (which some Asians and Asian Americans welcome as a positive stereotype), why dismantle this with self-ridicule?

Humor is a vehicle through which Asian American comedians communicate their perspectives to the public so as to elevate the minority's status and prove the competence of its members within the mainstream. While self-directed ethnic humor may allow Asian American voices to take part in the race and ethnicity discourse in America, it may still register as derogatory to insiders trying to live up to the “model minority” label and to climb the social ladder in the white-dominated world. Whether or not one enjoys self-deprecating humor depends not only upon one's sense of humor but upon how one positions oneself in society.

Asians and Asian Americans constitute not one coherent group but a mix of people with varied personalities, in addition to differences in terms of race, religion, and culture. The success of Asian American humor will depend upon approval and support from inside as much as upon recognition from outside. The rest of the century has a lot to look forward to.

Ayako Yoshimura

See Also Chinese Folklore; Ethnic Folklore; Japanese Folklore; Joke.

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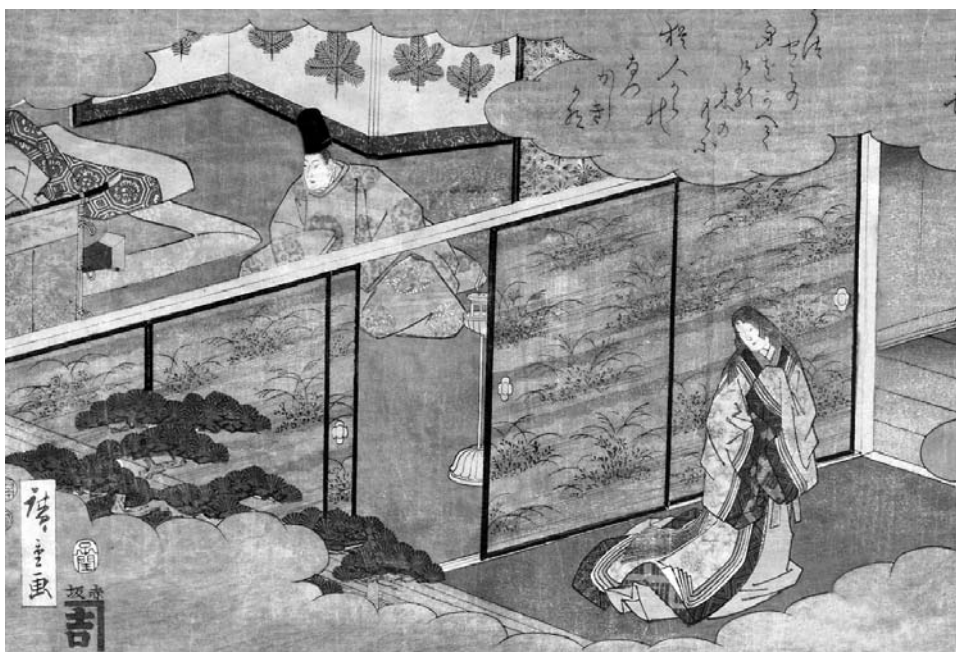
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Asian American Literature and Folklore

Asian American folklore is an abstract term that employs broad definition of folklore. The term stretches to accommodate the narrative history of Asians in America, Asian ethnic legacy including Asian material culture, religious traditions,



Japanese print by Hiroshige depicting a scene from a nineteenth-century edition of *The Tale of Genji*, a masterpiece of Japanese literature written by Murasaki Shikibu, ca. 1010. (Library of Congress)

performances, celebrations, Asian American identities, and so forth. Asian American folklore in relation to Asian American literature can contain folk literature, narrative, poetry, fiction, memoir and autobiography, and drama. Asian American writers often use Asian American folklore in their writings. Incorporating Asian American folklore is a bridge that can connect Asia to America in Asian America. It helps readers understand the uniqueness of Asian American cultures and history.

Asian American literature has been shaped by various components including Asian immigration history in America, transmission of ethnic legacy, assimilation and acculturation, the model minority myth, stereotypes, gender and generation conflicts, identity formulation, and cultural hybridity. In the process of transplantation and transmission, different cultural expectations between cultures have been brought to public scrutiny in Asian American literature. An array of theoretical perspectives has been adopted in the field of academic tradition as ways of interpreting and analyzing Asian American literature.

People whose backgrounds are white, mainstream middle class, and Western were recognized as “American” by people who have dominant conception of America. The Western world with entrenched ideology of “Orientalism” treated people across the Pacific and Asian inhabitants as perpetual foreigners and

aliens. The most evident example is found in the case of Japanese internment camps in both the United States and Canada during World War II. Japanese people and American-born Japanese descendents were not distinguished by the United States and Canadian governments. Such racist treatment of people in North America influenced the attitudes of many people of Asian descent toward their Asian heritage. Asian Americans can secure their American citizenship by “claiming America” rather than maintaining their ethnic heritage.

Some Asian Americans claim their America through literary works. Their writings reflect their desire to be recognized as American with a full membership in the United States. Amy Tan’s *The Joy Luck Club* (1989) and Gish Jen’s *Typical American* (1991) were written from the assimilationist point of view. In those books, America was described as a country of utopianist possibilities. *Aiiieeeee!* (1974), the first Asian American anthology, accentuated authors’ American nativity and later equivocated to include foreign-born writers. Currently, the label Asian American has broadened to include writings by Americans of Bangladeshi, Burmese, Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Hmong, Japanese, Korean, Indian, Indonesian, Laotian, Malaysian, Mongolian, Nepali, Pakistani, Pacific Islander, Punjabi, Sri Lankan, Thai, Tibetan, and Vietnamese descent.

While early Asian American writings focused on American nativity, Asian immigrants in the 1960s and 1970s stressed their ethnic legacy. As the 1965 Immigration Act resulted in demographic changes, immigrant writers have produced works with the voices of diverse ethnic origins. Many Asian American literary works portray immigration and relocation to the United States. A loss or transmission of the “original” culture is frequently represented in some Asian American literature. Some American-born Asians have also begun to take renewed interest in their ethnic ancestry and heritage. In Asian American literature, cultural nationalism seemed to be important in defending against marginalization. Scholars Oscar Campomanes, Elaine Kim, and Stephen Sumida began to call for specific forms of cultural alliances. Each scholar put emphasis on the distinctness of each Asian subgroup in America. Race and nation center around Asian American construct.

Scholars attempt to adopt an array of theoretical stances in interpreting a text. To approach a text, readers can use interpretive tools in many ways rather than one right way. Race and ethnicity are a meaningful category in Asian American literary studies. Asian American literature that concerns itself with the issues of ethnicity and race deals with the imbalance of power between dominant white groups and peoples of color, which is the attempt to change the unequal relationships. Ethnic literary criticisms concern themselves with the reality of people of color, the opportunities that have been denied them, and racial discrimination and prejudice that are salient themes in literature that portrays experiences of Asian Americans.

Sau-Ling Cynthia Wong employs an ethnic studies approach. Wong analyzed the double of a character in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* (1989) and argued that to fully understand the psychological and sometimes physical violence such as the defense mechanisms of repression and projection, traditional concepts of the double, in other words, universalistic theories used for understanding Western classics of double literature, are inadequate in understanding Asian American double literature, and one must read them in their sociopolitical context. According to Wong, much Asian American literature needs to be read with the racial shadow. Themes of race and ethnicity have been found in Asian American literature throughout Asian American immigrant history from historical fiction to contemporary literature. Asian American writers protest against discrimination and stereotypes and portray the lives of Asian Americans who struggled with financial issues and war in the mid-twentieth century. John Okada's *No-No Boy* (1978) details lives of Japanese Americans in internment camp through a Japanese American child's story. Literature that contains themes of race and ethnicity often employs folkloric elements. In Laurence Yep's *Dragonwings* (1975), Chinese folkloric meanings of dragons, such as dream, hope, and courage were incorporated. Yep employs Chinese heritage of dragon existence in order to represent the hopes and dreams Chinese immigrants could not give up while going through various hardships in America.

Asian Americans have grown up in a world that has placed them in marginal positions in American society. Many Asian Americans have often been seen as invisible. They have attempted to be acculturated to the white majority or seek to be a "model minority" by being exemplary citizens and keeping silent. Yoshiko Uchida and Laurence Yep are Asian American writers who present significant portrayals of Asian American lives from the perspectives of cultural insiders. They have focused on writing their own stories by placing themselves as an essential part of the American experience.

Yoshiko Uchida is one of the influential Asian American writers. Uchida is a Japanese American writer who recreated Japanese Americans' struggles in defining their self-identity. In *The Birthday Visitor* (1975) and *The Best Bad Thing* (1983), Uchida depicted the unique view Nisei children (second-generation Japanese American) held between two cultures. In *The Invisible Thread* (1991), she described how the character's self-identity is related to the reaction of a white mainstream society. In *A Jar of Dreams* (1981), she raised the issue of racial prejudice and discrimination. Two novels, *Journey to Topaz* (1971) and *Journey Home* (1978), dealt with her own family's internment experiences.

Laurence Yep is an award-winning Chinese American writer. He has written over fifty books for children and young adults in various genres. When Yep began writing, he wrote science fiction for adults. While he was writing science fiction, he realized that he was portraying himself as an outsider. Later, he found

that writing for children made him connect with the emotional core of his stories. It fascinated him and he began to write about what he knew and experienced as a Chinese American. Yep's first work for children was *Dragonwings* (1975), which resembled the process of self-discovery in exploring his cultural heritage. Beginning in 1975 with the publication of *Dragonwings*, Yep chronicled seven generations of Chinese Americans in the series of *The Golden Mountain Chronicles*. The two novels in the series *The Serpent's Children* (1996) and *Mountain Light* (1985) are about the first group of Chinese ancestors' adventures in surviving in the wilderness. In *Dragon's Gate* (1993), when the next generation came to America, they faced the reality of working on the transcontinental railroad. In that novel, a Chinese boy, Otter, is depicted as the helpless victim created by adults. *The Traitor* (2004) portrayed the generational and cultural gap between Otter and his son, Joseph, and their identity issue between the two cultures. *The Red Warrior* (2005) depicted the lives of Yep's father in the Great Depression of the 1930s. *Child of the Owl* (1977) and *Sea Glass* (1979) were about his own generation, which had lost their cultural heritage rooted in China. The characters in his novels reach for their dreams while paying with shadows. Yoshiko Uchida and Laurence Yep wrote books from insider perspectives and captured the frustration and hardships of Japanese Americans and Chinese Americans realistically. Their writings depicted the worldview that Japanese Americans and Chinese Americans uniquely hold.

Some scholars use psychoanalytic theory to understand representations of Asian Americans and their identity formation. Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* can be understood from a psychoanalytic lens. Psychological doubles represent two characters: the socially acceptable personality and the uninhibited self. The conventional double results from defense mechanisms of projection, repression, reaction, and so forth. The defenses are an unconscious mechanism in many cases, and the extremely positive or extremely negative mechanisms are not controlled.

Another major category in Asian American literary studies is gender and feminist literary criticism, which is also the attempt to resist dominant privileged positions as in ethnic studies criticism. While disrupting the naturalization of white male culture, feminist literary criticism is concerned with the imbalance of power relationships between women and men. This criticism attempts to resist Asian American historical imbalances between Asian American women and men. Feminist critics have also considered the interaction of gender and race categories in the construction of Asian American identity. These categories have been constructed historically and socioculturally. Kingston's personal memoir, *The Woman Warrior*, is a work of art that could share category of gender beyond racial boundaries in the dominant national culture. The novel achieved its literary excellence with the rise of the feminist approach. The story also contains folkloric elements. For example, in her fantasy in the section of White Tigers, Kingston is a warrior

and avenger like Fa Mulan, a female warrior in a Chinese folk legend. However, in reality, she realizes that she cannot escape from the power of Chinese folkloric meaning of the place of women among Chinese immigrants. They think that women are considered to be worthless and entirely dependent on men. At the end of the story, she decides to use her words as weapons for vengeance.

The ethnic nationalist and feminist phases in Asian American construct were questioned by newly developed theories, including postmodernism, poststructuralism, diaspora, transnationalism, and postcolonialism. Contemporary Asian American criticism has been engaged with difference and diaspora in poststructuralist discourse. The new theory pointed out the underestimation of heterogeneity, hybridity, and transnationalism among Asian Americans. The Asian diaspora produced writings of transnationals that resist ethnic and nationalistic appropriation. Lin Tai-yi's *The Eavesdropper* (1958) provides a critique of historical and cultural hegemony of China and America. In that novel, native place and exilic themes are removed, and the national boundaries are blurred. The individual is attached to a social world without national boundaries or natal place. The novel contains Confucian morals and Chinese virtues as folkloric elements the main character has inherited from China. He tries to reconcile himself between the two worlds with different cultural backgrounds.

Postcolonial theory is used for interpreting writings of Asian immigrants who come from places like Hawaii or the Philippines. Immigrants from colonized countries often bring memories of colonialism and inherit colonialism; some Asian American literature has emerged as a postcolonial phenomenon. Their local memories signify their colonial history. Today, descendents of imported Asian laborers in Hawaii vocalize their local memory through fiction, poetry, and media outlets. Their narratives expose how they inherit colonialism even when they are free of it. Postcolonial literature comes from a critique of the inheritance of a U.S. imperial culture. A similar case is found in Filipino American literature. It opposes and resists colonial standards. While Filipino American experiences are viewed as part of diaspora or immigrant writing, Filipino American writings could be read as postcolonial and neocolonial discourse. N. V. M. Gonzalez's *The Popcorn Man* (1993) and Meena Alexander's *Nampally Road* (1991) are written from postcolonial perspectives. Lois-Ann Ymanakas's poem *Parts* (1991), a postcolonial literature of Hawaii, is written in pidgin language through which the voice of one person speaks to others. Hawaii's Creole English as a folkloric element conveys colonial history of local Hawaiians.

Asian Americans who are gay or lesbian seek to voice their opinions and positions through literature. Queer studies stresses that queer sexuality cannot be deemed to be downplayed nor culturally produced by the West. They resist stereotypes of queer bodies and sexuality. The Oriental stereotypes define queer Asian American males as effeminate, weak, and passive, and queer Asian

American females as trapped in their sexuality, which remains primarily heterosexual. They resist the societal strictures and governmental regulations. Lawrence Chua's *Gold by the Inch* (1998) portrays queer sexuality in national space. Through literature, queer Asian Americans try to create a space that subverts stereotypes of queer sexuality, controls representations of queerness, and reveals complexities of queer identity.

Eunhyun Kim

See Also Asian American Humor and Folklore; Chinese Folklore; Ethnic Folklore; Japanese Folklore.

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Asian American Popular Culture and Folklore

Since the 1960s, Asian Americans have frequently been portrayed as “the model minority,” a racial group that is uniformly depicted as successfully assimilated to American (read: Euro-American) culture. To highlight this, Sandra Oh and Kal Penn have leading roles as likeable doctors on two separate Emmy-winning broadcast series, *Grey’s Anatomy* and *House*, respectively. In 2009, Penn, a New Jersey native, left *House* for a position as Associate Director for the White House Office of Public Engagement. He serves as the liaison within the arts and the Asian Pacific Islander American communities. These ubiquitous stereotypes of the model minority stand in direct contrast to previously held dominant images of Asian Americans in the media as the “pollutant” (a threat to white racial purity in the mid-nineteenth century), the “coolie” (a threat to white working-class masculinity), the “deviant” (a threat to white sexuality), the “yellow peril” (a threat to

the American nation), and the “gook” (a slur popularized during the Cold War to dehumanize Asians). Despite this history of narrow Asian American constructions in U.S. popular culture, Asian Americans are and always have been a heterogeneous group, representing dozens of distinct nationalities (e.g., Hmong, Japanese, and Vietnamese) to religions (e.g., Christianity, Buddhism, and Muslim) to languages (e.g., Mandarin, Korean, and Tagalog), cuisines, and spanning across every imaginable socioeconomic group.

Generalizing the experiences of Asian Americans as a singular group with a unified history would be a grave mistake. However, it is important to acknowledge the significance of the term *Asian American*. It has served as a politically potent umbrella term for the Asian American community as it challenges the derogatory designation by the Western world to all of Asia as the exotic “oriental.” In the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau count, Asian Americans represented roughly 4 percent of the total population; this figure is expected to more than double by 2050. Compared to other racial groups, they also exhibit the highest rates of out-marriage and producing interracial children, further complicating what it means to *be*, *look*, or *behave* “Asian American.” While we recognize the heterogeneity of Asian Americans, identifiable values and beliefs, or folklore, certainly do exist in this racial subculture.

Up to the mid-twentieth century, Asian Americans, like other racial minority groups, have historically been denied citizenship rights in the United States; these include, but are not limited to, the right to fair wages, to vote, to testify against whites, to own property, to marry whites, and to become citizens. Marginalization in the political sphere have contributed to the rising importance of the cultural sphere, an active site for creation, resistance, and identification for minority groups who have been historically denied a voice in the political arena. Today, this voice often transcends the boundaries of face-to-face interactions and expands globally through technological advances, including satellite broadcasting and the Internet. In this way, folklore is no longer limited to oral traditions but is captured and transmitted to a global cyberspace audience. Asian Americans, in particular youth, are a highly “connected” demographic, technologically speaking. Many of them are first- and second-generation Asian Americans who grew up during the proliferation of the Internet, and coincidentally, the globalization of mass media, which forever altered the landscape of popular culture by morphing time and space. As a result, contemporary Asian American popular culture and folklore are deeply intertwined with each other.

The terms *popular culture* and *mass culture* have often been used interchangeably. They are both believed to represent the values of ordinary folks rather than the refined tastes of elites whose social capital (i.e., who they know) and cultural capital (i.e., what they know) are expected to correlate with their financial capital (i.e., wealth). Hence, popular culture is more likely to reflect the values of non-

elites. As such, popular culture serves as a rich site to explore Asian American folklore, highlighting the mundane traditions of their everyday life to the transmission of their morals and values from one generation to the next. Popular culture as an examination of folklore reveals a group's expression of their way of living, whether it is disseminated through oral tradition (e.g., stand-up comedy), written narratives (e.g., films), and/or cyberspace (e.g., websites). In no way are these categories meant to be exhaustive or mutually exclusive. The examples offered in this summary demonstrate that Asian Americans are not merely consumers of popular culture, but more importantly, producers of it, as well. In essence, Asian American popular culture as folklore represents the manners by which Asian Americans express their values and beliefs, or folklore, in a society that continues to marginalize their existence through the perpetuation of stereotypes in American mass media. The entry in this encyclopedia examines a cross-section of Asian American popular culture and folklore, as expressed through stand-up comedy, film, and the Internet.

Margaret Cho: All American Girl?

Folklorists examine “joke-telling” as a form of oral tradition to reveal insights about a group. Jokes about Asian Americans often reflect American anxieties about Asian Americans as “inassimilable” despite their model minority status (e.g., poking fun of language skills or facial features) or possessing a questionable sexuality (e.g., emasculating men and hyper-sexualizing women). These types of jokes disclose information about dominant and subordinate group relationships at any given time and place. Although telling racial jokes is increasingly becoming politically incorrect, the messages embodied in jokes have not disappeared. In many ways, highly caricatured and/or exoticized stereotypes of Asian Americans in popular culture have replaced jokes. These types of jokes are not created by Asian Americans, but reveal a lot about the ways in which American popular culture views Asian Americans.

On the other hand, Asian American comedians have frequently challenged and rearticulated “joke-telling” from an Asian American perspective. For example, Jo Koy proclaims: “We built the best cars, you don’t think we can drive them!” and Russell Peters declares: “The smaller your manhood, the more you will hump because your ego is at stake. You don’t believe me, look at the two largest populations in the world!” While Koy confronts the stereotype that “Asians can’t drive,” Peters challenges the myth of the emasculated Asian male.

Of all the Asian American stand-up comedians, Margaret Cho is perhaps one of the most successful. In the early 1990s, Cho starred in the first broadcast sitcom featuring an Asian American family. She played the rebellious daughter of a traditional family. Her sitcom was short-lived, but provided fodder for her comedy act, “I’m the One that I Want.” Cho’s comedy leaves no subject untouched,

Anna May Wong was the first Chinese American movie star. (Library of Congress)



as she makes jokes about race, gender, and sexual orientation. Considering herself a minority in all these spheres, she suggests her voice is an authentic one and often takes a subversive stance. For example, Cho confronts the ways in which Asians are often mocked for having small eyes and asks Anglo-Americans, “Why your eyes are so big?” She turns the table on Anglos by normalizing small eyes and questioning their big eyes. In another show, she brings up the topic of the Asian glow that some are afflicted with when they drink alcohol. Cho admits: “I’m not sunburned, I’m just f*cked up.”

Unlike “joke-telling,” “acting” as an aspect of folklore has been under-examined and under-theorized. Hollywood is predominantly white and Asian Americans continue to face barriers because of their race. Anna May Wong (1905–1961) has been heralded for paving the way for Asian American actors. Often relegated to the limited number of orientalist roles that were commonplace at that time in the United States, Wong learned to speak with a British accent, as well as learn French and German in order to acquire work in Europe. In 1935, Wong rejected a role in the film adaptation of Pearl S. Buck’s novel *The Good Earth*, which boasted the largest budget in cinematic production to date. She found it insulting to be offered the only unsympathetic role in a picture with an all-white cast portraying Chinese characters; although the use of blackface was becoming obsolete, the use of *yellowface* was commonly practiced.

Although Asian Americans are becoming more visible, they still constitute a minority in Hollywood. Daniel Dae Kim initially considered a profession in

investment banking, but stuck to acting, eventually securing recurring roles in several popular television series, including *Angel*, *24*, and *Lost*, the series that ultimately propelled him to his current stardom. Ironically, Kim's Americanized upbringing was an obstacle when *Lost* started filming. His co-star, Yoon-Jin Kim, coached him on the Korean language to make the show seem more authentic. Today, he is an activist for Asian American causes as a result of his experiences with racism in the acting industry. For him, playing the role of Jin in *Lost* is a relief, having been cast as characters of almost every other Asian heritage but his own Korean one. Moreover, Kim defies the stereotype of the typical Asian American male offered as comic relief with their questionable sexuality in popular culture (e.g., the role of Ari Gold's assistant, Lloyd, in *Entourage*). In 2005, he made *People* magazine's Sexiest Man Alive list. He was the only recognizable Asian man to ever make the list; Keanu Reeves and Russell Wong also share an Asian ethnic heritage, but they are less likely to be marked as Asian American actors.

Film as Folklore

Written narratives, in the form of films, are another way to explore Asian American popular culture and folklore. In particular, two Asian American films have received notable mainstream success, *Joy Luck Club* (1993) and *Better Luck Tomorrow* (2002). Both films explore Asian American folklore, offering more nuanced representations of Asian Americans than any other previous mainstream films. *Joy Luck Club*, directed by Wayne Wang, was based on a novel written by Amy Tan and was considered a watershed film for Asian Americans. The film explored the relationships of four Chinese American women and their immigrant mothers. Employing a majority cast of Asian Americans, this film received praise for its portrayal of Asian American women and their family roles. On the other hand, many Asian Americans criticized the film for its largely negative portrayal of Asian American men as cold, abusive, and/or undesirable.

Better Luck Tomorrow, written and directed by Justin Lin, is another staple of Asian American folklore. Lin grew up in Orange Country and attended UCLA film school. Lin subverted the model minority stereotype by writing about four Asian American, Ivy League bound, honor roll students who get caught up in a world characterized by cheating, robbery, drugs, and murder. In this manner, Lin challenges the unidimensional characterization of Asian Americans as model minorities, exposing a darker side often left unexplored. Despite the many accolades this film received, some felt it was a betrayal to the Asian American community. Like *Joy Luck Club*, *Better Luck Tomorrow* was subject to criticism for portraying Asian Americans in a negative light. Most critics overlooked the larger structural problems facing Asian Americans—that is, the lack of substantive roles in Hollywood.

Asian Americans in Cyberspace

With the pervasiveness of the Internet as a major source of communication, face-to-face “word of mouth” is being quickly replaced with mass e-mails, tweets, blogs, and even the creation of Web sites meant to relay information to large numbers of people instantaneously. Many of these Web sites created by Asian Americans reflect issues and questions directly affecting their community. For example, Lela Lee, a rhetoric student at UC Berkeley, created the first “Angry Little Asian Girl” comic character in 1994 as a way to resist stereotypes of Asian girls as passive. Although many people thought her idea to turn her characters into a cartoon was a good one, she was often told there was no market for Asians. Nonetheless, by 1998, she launched her website, <http://www.angrylittle-girls.com>, and in 2005, she published her first book. She now carries a wide variety of products ranging from canvas bags to t-shirts carried in specialty retail stores.

In similar fashion, in 2000, Kristina Wong created the subversive “mock” mail order bride site, <http://www.bigbadchinesemama.com>, for her senior project at UCLA. Addressing the ubiquity of Asian females on the Internet being reduced to sex objects, this provocative Web site was created to draw in men looking for “lotus blossoms” and instead offer them blazing insults for their patriarchal proclivities. Today, the site is used by activists and teachers in college classrooms.

However, not all Web sites are designed to be political statements. For instance, <http://alllookslike.com> originated as a joke to confront the urban myth that “all Asians look the same.” The creator, Dyske Suematsu, invites users to take a test and see how accurately individuals are able to distinguish among eighteen Korean, Japanese, and Chinese faces photographed in New York City; according to the Web site, the average user identifies seven faces correctly. This Web site is a testament to the social construction of race and the flawed practice of relying on physical characteristics to be used as racial identifiers. Suematsu asserts that he considers his Web site “a joke, but at the same time a celebration of the similarities and differences among Asians.”

Linda Kim

See Also Asian American Humor and Folklore; Ethnic Folklore.

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Assault, Supernatural

Attack by a spirit or by spiritual means. The term *supernatural* has had many meanings, some of them very complex and culturally specific. However, a cross-culturally applicable concept can be derived from the simplest common denominator of the word's various usages. Most basically, *supernatural* refers to *spirits*, sentient beings that can exist and act without a physical body. *Supernatural assault*, then, is assault by spiritual means. This definition is well suited to a great many folk beliefs, but it does leave an ambiguous category of "extraordinary" creatures who sometimes assault humans, according to certain traditions. These range from werewolves and other shape-shifters to occupants of unidentified flying objects (UFOs) who abduct people from their beds. Some believe that such creatures have spiritual significance, others think that they in fact *are* spirits of some kind, and still others believe them to be entirely physical. This uncertain category will be considered last.

The idea that human beings could be supernaturally injured appears to be both ancient and ubiquitous. The events taken to constitute such assault are quite varied, including ordinary illness or injury in which a supernatural cause is inferred, special classes of illness considered always to result from supernatural attack in which the evidence of a particular supernatural cause is still indirect, and experiences in which the perception of the supernatural attacker is a central feature. Each of these kinds of assault has been associated with practically every sort of supernatural agent, from witches to ghosts to vampires to demons. The result is a very complex set of categories, and many of the characteristics attributed to each kind of attacker differ from one locale to another. A cross-cultural description follows that sets out rough conceptual categories of supernatural assault found in many traditions around the world. Each is briefly illustrated with reference to one or two specific traditions. This process inevitably downplays local, culture-specific differences. This is a necessary result of summary description and not an indication that these local variations are of lesser importance. This discussion is presented in sufficiently general terms to apply to the traditions of most cultures, but it should be understood that although the general statements that follow refer to widely found phenomena, they are not necessarily universal in application.

The human soul is supernatural, that is, although it spends part of its career in a body, it does not require that body for its existence. In some traditions, the soul

exists before the body and chooses the body in which it will be born. In practically all traditions, the soul animates the body and survives the body at death, and under some circumstances, it can leave the body and return during life. In some traditions, people are believed to have more than a single soul. Supernatural assault sometimes may produce a direct physical effect, such as bruises or scratches, but effects on the body are more often seen as operating through effects on the soul.

During life, one's soul can be dislodged. The resulting condition of "soul loss" is often called "magical fright" or "fright illness" in the literature because the condition is often believed to be produced by sudden fear or emotional shock. The most frequently described tradition of soul loss is the Latin American *susto*, but similar traditions are found in many parts of the world. This is usually an explanation attached retrospectively to explain a condition of sickness. The characteristics of such sicknesses are often distinctive, as in the case of *susto*, and are probably not merely derived from local names for medically recognized diseases. Some of them may truly be culture-bound syndromes; others may represent the recognition of sicknesses not yet known to modern medicine. Many circumstances can cause soul loss, including such natural events as seeing a terrible accident or hearing of the unexpected death of a loved one. But this loss also can be caused by sorcery or by a ghost or other spirit, and then it is a consequence of supernatural assault. In these cases, the person who has suffered the magical fright may have no memory of the event, in which case the event took place entirely at the spiritual level.

Another widely believed supernatural cause of illness is the "evil eye." The best-known example of this concept is the Italian *mat ojo*, but the idea is found in many places. In many versions, an attack by means of the evil eye barely qualifies as assault because the damage is done unintentionally. Most commonly, sickness or misfortune is brought on one person by the envy of another. As with supernatural magical fright, the victim—and in this case, the perpetrator—is unaware that anything is happening at the time.

Some living persons, because of training or a special aptitude, can leave their physical bodies and travel as disembodied spirits. In this state, they are believed to be able to see and interact with other spirits. This technique is used by some healers to find and bring back a lost soul and cure a case of magical fright. Some wicked people can travel in soul form to do harm. They may attempt to kill persons or terrify them and disturb their sleep. In English tradition, this is called "hagging" or "witch riding." The victim is held helpless and oppressed to the point that breathing becomes difficult.

Normally, a person's soul "goes on" to the afterlife or to be reincarnated at death, but some souls remain close to where they have lived or return under special conditions. Since this is not the normal course, these ghosts are especially

likely to be dangerous. Some people with special knowledge and aptitude are able to cause these ghosts to do their bidding.

Ghosts can assault people in a great variety of ways. Haunted locations are places to which ghosts are bound either because of intense attachment during life or because of the circumstances of their deaths. Whatever the reason, most haunted places are dangerous. Earth-bound spirits are themselves in a “sick” state (otherwise, they would have progressed), and their anger, envy, and other negative emotions cause them to accost people who trespass in their places. (It should be noted, though, that some haunting ghosts are said to be innocuous or even friendly, and sometimes, a haunting ghost handsomely repays good treatment.) The assaults committed by such ghosts range from intentionally causing fear by producing weird sounds and apparitions to effecting a variety of transitory physical effects and inducing terrible dreams to causing potentially fatal diseases. In animist traditions, ghosts are not the only spirits associated with particular places; in Southeast Asia, for example, there are many risks encountered from “wild spirits.”

Ghosts sometimes return to particular people rather than places. Their motives may be very positive but still result in assault. This is the case when a ghost returns to admonish a parent or spouse who is abusing someone the ghost cared for in life. Sometimes, a ghostly assault is an act of revenge, visited on a person who inflicted injury in life. The avenging ghost may strike a person and cause a cancer to grow at the site of the blow, harass the guilty party into confession, or otherwise make life miserable. Less severe is the case of a ghost whose purpose is to force a living relative into a more prudent and honorable life path, as in the case of the Hawaiian tradition of *aumakua*, which has been translated as “behavioral direction visions.”

A common reason for ghostly return is the absence of proper burial and mourning. This situation has been especially difficult for some of the refugee groups who fled Southeast Asia in the 1970s. In the process of fleeing, many relatives were killed under conditions that prevented proper funerary rites, and many problems, including illness and sometimes death, have been attributed to the resulting ghostly returns.

An assaulting spirit actually may seek to displace one’s soul in order to possess the body. Motives for such possession vary, and many traditions allow for benign possession, as for mediumistic communication between the living and the dead. But most traditions also acknowledge harmful possession. In Christian tradition, it has generally been believed that demons—fallen angels who were never in human form—carry out possession of this type. Such non-ghost possession is found in many traditions, but ghosts also are widely believed to possess the living. The act of possession itself may be perceived as an assault in which the victim struggles and feels an alien spirit entering the body by force, attempting to push out the soul of the rightful owner. In other cases, the victim is unaware of

anything but gaps of “missing time” and must have the events of the possession recounted. During possession, the victim’s body may do antisocial acts or physically harm itself. Somewhat less intrusive is the attachment of spirits to the living in a way that influences their behavior, sometimes called “obsession.” In spiritist traditions, such influences may be either good or bad; for other believers, the influences are more consistently detrimental. Most traditions have techniques for identifying harmful spirit possession or influence and treating it by expelling the offending spirits.

In many cultures, there exists the concept of supernatural sexual assault. In European tradition, such attacks were carried out by both male (incubi) and female (succubi) demons. Some held that the demon actually had no gender but merely took the form opposite to its victim. Reports of sexual assault by spirits continue to the present.

Magical assault is sometimes carried out at a distance through the principles of magic described by Sir James George Frazer in *The Golden Bough*: that like produces like (the principle of similarity) and that once in contact, things continue to act on each other even after contact has been severed (the principle of contagion). Both principles are illustrated by the use of an effigy that includes, for example, some of the victim’s hair or nail parings (contagion) to cause that person pain and sickness by injuring the effigy (similarity). This and a variety of other techniques of magical assault, such as “bone pointing,” are found all over the world. A more directly supernatural kind of sorcery is spirit magic, in which a spirit is bound by the sorcerer to do his or her bidding. Spirit magic is often used for healing and other benign purposes (many healers have one or more spirit helpers or “guides,” what the Laotian Hmong call “tame spirits” in translation), but the same spirits can do all kinds of mischief.

Magical assault, like the attack of a ghost, sometimes may be directed against an evil one. In Japan, for example, the experience known as haggling or witch riding in English is called *kanashibani*, which is sometimes translated as “metal bound.” The term derives from the magic of Fudomyoo, a Buddha who fights against evil. His statue is placed at the entrance to temples, where it is said to bind evil ones so they cannot move, preventing them from entering. In medieval Japan, Ninjas and Buddhist monks were said to be trained to bind their opponents as if by metal strings. Similar “spellbinding” traditions, used against enemies and evildoers, are very widely found.

It was noted earlier that some categories of assault (and attackers) are ambiguous with regard to the previously outlined definition of supernatural. These types of assaults and attackers do not constitute an entirely new category so much as a boundary where opinion, often within a single tradition, differs on the physical/spiritual nature of events. Fairies sometimes appear to be a physical race with magical powers, but others consider them to be spirits. Some Newfoundlanders,

for example, said that the fairies were fallen angels who were not bad enough to be consigned to hell. Fairies often mislead wanderers and sometimes strike them or wound them with fairy weapons. Bell's palsy, a neurological condition causing temporary paralysis on one side of the face, was attributed to fairies by some Newfoundlanders. Fairies also can cause blindness and all sorts of other injury. Similar races of "little people" are found all over the world.

The activities of witches are sometimes similarly ambiguous. During the witchcraft persecutions in Europe, there was a great debate over whether witches flew in their physical bodies or after leaving their physical bodies behind. The European witchcraft tradition clearly included the possibility that witches might not only leave their human bodies but also either change them or enter alternative bodies such as those of animals. In such a case, injury to the animal would then be found on the body of the witch at a later time, confirming the identity. The belief in shape shifting is found universally, and shape-shifters usually are very dangerous. Shape shifting is often associated with witchcraft, as in the Navajo "skinwalker" who transforms itself by putting on the skin of a coyote or wolf. This image is similar to the European werewolf; here too the transformation process appears supernatural, but the result seems to be a physical agent who can do direct bodily harm. Another related belief is that witches can "slip out of their skins" and travel about invisibly, a belief reported from the U.S. South. Although this sounds like a metaphorical description of witches traveling in spirit form, some informants say that, though invisible, the witches can be touched when they are out of their skins and that they feel rubbery, like raw meat.

Vampires also share some of this physical/supernatural ambiguity. Traditional vampires, unlike the movie variety, do not live above ground in closed caskets that they can conveniently open and exit at night. Rather, their bodies remain in the buried casket, and their travel and attacks seem to involve either spectral appearance or shape shifting. Some accounts suggest that a burrow connects the casket with the surface and that the vampire can leave in the form of a small animal. But the blood of the victim, in European belief, somehow gets to the corpse of the vampire, which is found filled with it when the vampire is finally identified and destroyed. In other traditions, creatures like the vampire (such as the "viscera sucker" of the Philippines) seem to take vital essence rather than physical nourishment from their victims. The result, of course, can be the same: sickness and death.

One final ambiguous category indicates the continued vigor of traditions of supernatural assault. This is "UFO abduction." Until the mid-1980s, even people fascinated by UFOs considered those who claimed to have been taken aboard the flying objects to be part of a lunatic fringe. But by the late 1980s, the topic of UFO abduction was being taken much more seriously. Stories in the media documented the increasing number of people claiming to have been taken against their will to strange craft, where they were subjected to painful physical and

sexual examinations and had semen or ova taken from them. At present, there are at least dozens of investigators and abductee support groups in the United States, and a substantial number of mental health professionals are taking the abductees' claims seriously. Although many investigators are convinced that recent abduction events have been carried out by a technologically advanced alien civilization, others, including many abductees, believe that what is happening is metaphysical rather than physical. Abductees are often accosted in their bedrooms and paralyzed in events much like those involved in haggging. Subsequently, they may be taken right through the ceilings of their rooms. The differing opinions on how this occurs recall the earlier debate about whether the flight of witches was physical or spiritual. The alien hybridization program has many elements reminiscent of fairy abduction, which sometimes included sexual union between fairies and humans.

There have been many theories about why the belief in supernatural assault recurs in so many cultural settings, and most of them probably supply pieces of the explanation. Such a belief can serve social control functions, suggesting, for example, consequences for antisocial behavior—consequences against which wealth and power cannot necessarily protect. Also, as an explanation of disease, the belief offers a course of action. Psychoanalytic authors have suggested explanations in terms of repressed sexuality.

In addition to such theories, there is now evidence that a substantial number of supernatural belief traditions (both negative and positive) are partially supported by experiences that occur cross-culturally. Such experiences seem to play a central role in the formation and persistence of these traditions. The category that has been most completely described is what Newfoundlanders call “the Old Hag” or haggging, although the perpetrator may be either male or female. In this experience, people awaken to find themselves paralyzed, although fully awake. They may hear shuffling footsteps approach; they may see a grotesque creature clamber up on the bed and squat on their chests, making it difficult to breathe; or they may be overwhelmed by a “sense of presence.” The great majority of victims are convinced that something evil is in their immediate vicinity. Most surprising is the fact that this type of experience, complete with its complex set of grotesque features, is found in different cultural settings all over the world, including modern North America where most victims have no cultural frame in which to place the event. This experience is what sleep researchers and physicians call “sleep paralysis.” There are known physiological mechanisms that explain the paralysis, but the peculiar, cross-culturally stable patterning of the subjective experience is still puzzling.

The sleep paralysis experience is a universally available empirical basis for supernatural assault traditions, and it has been attributed to each of the spiritual attackers described earlier. Although this event is the most thoroughly described,

it appears that there may be other ubiquitous experiential foundations for these assault traditions, just as there are for more positive belief traditions (such as the near-death experience). For example, in multiple personality disorder, the alter personality sometimes claims to be a demon or other spirit alien to the host. This does not happen only to those with a strong prior belief in possession. There may well be many other underlying experiential categories. In order to find such patterns and make theoretical sense of them, it is first necessary to take traditions of the supernatural seriously—that is to inquire into them as though they may refer to actual experiences. To do this, one must not only seek the cultural repertoire of beliefs but also interview those who claim to be direct observers. Many will reveal a retrospective interpretation of mundane events. But others may give us new knowledge about phenomena that are genuinely puzzling, as is sleep paralysis. In turn, such empirical elements put the traditions in a new light, making their logical structures more understandable. Sleep paralysis by itself, occurring among about 20 percent of the population, provides an empirical basis for the belief that evil spirits exist. If that belief is established, the reference to such powerful agents in theories of disease etiology is not so difficult to understand.

David J. Hufford

See Also Belief; Folk; Exorcism; Magic; Night Hag; Possession; Vampire; Werewolf.

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Audience

A word derived from the Latin *audientia*, meaning a hearing or listening. In folklore scholarship, the term *audience* may refer to a variety of social groups (or individuals) who constitute the actual (or intended) receiving party in a transmission process. Depending on the dynamics of the activity involved, the term may signify a listener to verbal or musical communication or a spectator of visual presentation or activity. In a broader sense, closely related labels (e.g., *the public*, *fans*, *clients*) also are used to refer to a customary audience or to consumers of a material culture product (artifact). Typically, an audience is physically present with the source of the communication; the audience may also be intended (as in the case of producing a commodity for a certain category of a population) or imaginary (symbolic interactional—e.g., in AT 894, “The Ghoulish Schoolmaster and the Stone of Pity,” a persecuted heroine tells her sorrows to a stone, which bursts out of compassion for her).

During the early stages of folklore scholarship, only casual references were made to the audience, especially with reference to narrative materials (e.g., *Märchen*, ballads). The most pronounced emphasis placed by a folklorist on the audience came in the 1920s as part of Walter Anderson’s “Law of Self-Correction.” Anderson credited the audience of orally communicated tales with censoring narrators into conforming to established characteristics of a tale text, thus exerting a stabilizing influence on traditions. Other folklorists defined some genres in terms of the presence or absence of an audience and its expectations. For example, Iouri Sokolov argued that one can chant a song for one’s self but that there is no solitary tale telling since narrating a tale presupposes the presence of an audience; similarly, C. W. von Sydow distinguished between the long *chimerates* and *novellates*, on the one hand, and the short animal fables and jocular fables, on the other, according to a raconteur’s purpose vis-à-vis a listening audience.

Subsequent theoretical developments led to the inclusion of the audience as a basic factor in studying lore. One such development was the anthropological functional approach, which was heavily influenced by behavioristic theories of learning wherein labels such as *cues* and *intervening variables* designated the context for a learning process. Under the terms of functional studies, the audience becomes a component of the context within which cultural institutions operate, and recurrent practices are learned or unlearned.

As did Anderson earlier, many folklorists came to view social reward by an audience as a major factor in motivating narrators, singers, minstrels, dancers,

and other performers to publicly perform their art or exercise their craft. Stith Thompson pointed out the impact of such rewards on raconteurs; Albert Lord reported the influence of a “critical audience” on minstrels’ performances; Bengt Holbeck concluded that if meaning in tales were to be understood, the traditional audience had to be seen in conjunction with the narrators. Likewise, in the field of material culture, the role of the consumer is emphasized. Warren E. Roberts noted a craftsman’s eagerness to produce “satisfactory items” due to a close personal contact with the customer and expectations to serve the customer again, and Henry Glassie pointed out the folk artist’s sensitiveness to the “audience’s needs and pleasures.”

This form of interaction (as compared with feedback) between a source and a recipient in terms of effect (reward and punishment or absence thereof) received further indirect elaboration in the “ethnography of speaking” espoused by Dell Hymes and in “performance-centered” approaches advocated by Roger Abrahams, Richard Bauman, and others. The new nomenclature for this formula is the *responsibility/accountability* assumed by a speaker/performer to an audience (and vice versa). Imbedded in this view of “cultural behavior”—to use Hymes’s words—is the audience’s response, which will reward or punish the performer. According to behavioristic learning theories, effect is the basic force responsible for the continuity and discontinuity of behavior, especially that category of traditional cultural behavior that may be designated as “folkloric behavior.”

Hasan El-Shamy

See Also Performance; Psychological Approach; Superorganic Theories; Tradition.

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Authenticity

Clearly identifiable authorship or the uniqueness of a folklore item, such as an authentic piece of folk art as opposed to mass-produced copies of it; also, the ability of cultural objects or performances to evoke a sense of genuineness among those who partake of them, such as the strong emotional or even physical response of audiences witnessing a ritual. The term derives from the Greek *authentēs*, meaning made by one's own hand, original, or genuine. In classic and medieval usage, *authenticity* was primarily applied to objects and scriptures, particularly in the religious and legal realms.

The intellectual, social, and political transformations that began with the Enlightenment brought forth individual experience as a second realm of authenticity, which remains central to modern philosophy. In the breakup of feudal life worlds that would eventually lead to the formation of bourgeoisies and democracies, upper-class literati in Western societies began to question the sincerity of social interaction, as civilized manners and behaviors increasingly removed people from expressing themselves in plain, truthful, and unpremeditated ways. Intellectuals thus sought to discover places and states of being where authenticity flourished undisturbed by what Jean-Jacques Rousseau termed the "wound of reflection." Excessive civilization had, from this perspective, covered over authentic ways of being and expression, and thus the search began for peoples or social classes that remained in primeval states in order to then recover authenticity from such examples and employ it for the recovery and renewal of the self.

Aside from the exotic savages encountered in the colonial expansion, one such locus of authenticity was thought to be the European peasantry. Labeled *the folk*, this group and its material and spiritual artifacts became the focus of folklore studies, which emerged around 1800. The search for authenticity was thus a core concern in the formation of the discipline, and the material and the experiential component of authenticity became intertwined. The concept served as a powerful means to legitimate the subject matter, but itself remained curiously unexamined. Only in the 1980s did authenticity undergo increasing analytic scrutiny, particularly with regard to questions of cultural commodification (as in the mass marketing of indigenous artifacts) and the politics of culture (as in the use of folklore materials for diverse sociopolitical goals). Eventually, the absolute nature of the concept was questioned, and the notion of authenticity as a socially negotiated quality emerged instead.

Despite its ancient Greek roots, the meaning of the term *authenticity* is thoroughly modern. It emerged in the mid-eighteenth century, concurrently with both the political transformations brought about by the French Revolution and the socioeconomic changes initiated by the Industrial Revolution. Both the political and the economic changes furthered the growth of increasingly individualistic worldviews in place of the communal ethos dominant in feudal societies. The excitement of dramatic change and technological progress therefore also entailed a sense of loss of community, and the romantically inspired search for authenticity around the turn of the nineteenth century attempted to counteract this loss. Emphasizing the need for getting in touch with their own innermost feelings and emotions, romantic writers and thinkers sought to uncover the lost origins of poetry. This was closely entwined with the perception of natural purity, on the one hand, and civilization as a spoiling agent, on the other. Works such as Ossian (later discovered to be a fraud) inspired the collection of folksong and folk narrative on a grand scale, as upper-class individuals hoped to regain their own lost authenticity by reading and imitating folk poetry. A vocabulary relying on tropes such as cleanliness and genuineness of natural manifestations, threatened loss of paradise, and alienation from society was employed by the Romantics, who were initially driven by a largely emotional desire to recoup the authentic. Although this vocabulary lingers to the present, the desire to restore authentic origins moved from the emotional realm and became an increasingly scholarly, scientific preoccupation. Scholars began to devise techniques of collecting and representing the essence of folkness in the form of texts and artifacts. In the work of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, for instance, one recognizes the effort to turn the sociopolitical quest for authenticity into a scientifically valid enterprise. Folklore materials, the standards used in collecting them, and the groups and individuals from whom scholars collected were subjected to explicit or implicit authenticity criteria. This perception of more and less genuine groups and cultural productions grew into a rarely questioned scientific canon. The ideology that relative isolation from modern forces such as mass communication and technological advances preserves cultures in a purer (hence, superior) state continued to inform choices in fieldwork sites until the romantic mystique of fieldwork itself began to be examined.

In contrast to authenticity standards in the domain of high culture, where individual, known authorship of artistic production served as a means to determine originality, the authenticity of an item of folklore was established by proving anonymous authorship and continuity through traditional channels of communication. Individual performers living within presumably untainted communities were considered only as vessels through whom folklore materials were passed on. In a variety of theoretical folkloristic projects, such as those of the historic-geographic school, the scholar's task consisted of cleansing from folklore materials the impurities that had crept into them through human error and establishing

the original or Urform. In the public sphere, the appeal of authenticity was considerable as well. Folkloristic notions of originality and cultural purity fueled applications in anything from (romantic) nationalist rhetoric to small-scale preservational or restorational associations.

In the second half of the twentieth century, folklorists began to move from an item- or text-oriented focus that had disregarded intentionality and creativity on the part of the folk to a processual approach in which actors and audiences were recognized as active shapers of folklore. Simultaneously, scholars faced a variety of cultural manifestations that forced them to examine the latent dichotomies informing much of their thinking. By adhering to the folk-versus-nonfolk dichotomy and the corresponding differentiation between the genuine or authentic versus the spurious, folklorists artificially isolated the materials they studied from the cultural processes in which they were embedded. Issues such as the mechanical reproduction of folk art or the touristic exploitation of costume, festival, and foodways brought forth the *folklorismu* discourse in Europe and the concept of fake-folklore in the United States. Both notions were initially conceived to separate out authentic folk culture from the machinations of mass markets. Closer examination of issues such as the commodification of cultural goods in the larger framework of the politics of culture forced scholars to recognize the artificial boundaries that they themselves had constructed around folklore and folk communities. Cases where the purported authenticity of folkloric materials was foregrounded began to be studied, for instance, in the intersection of folk art and the art market, the display of ethnicity, or the encounter of tourists and natives. Agents in these settings clearly constructed authenticities according to arbitrary criteria suiting their particular needs. Such insights helped the discipline to recognize its own complicity in endowing some cultural goods with greater significance than others. The hegemonic implications of disciplinary theory and practice in the discourse on authenticity thus finally became an object of analysis itself.

Regina Bendix

See Also Fakelore; Folklorismus/Folklorism; Invented Tradition; Tradition.

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Autograph Book

A volume for collecting handwritten verse and prose. This written material can be traditional or original, comically irreverent or high-mindedly serious. It can represent very personal feelings or repeat customary formulas. Messages are usually quite brief, perhaps consisting only of a traditional greeting phrase with the writer’s signature (“Best wishes, Spike”).

Also called *friendship books* and *memory books*, autograph books existed as early as the fifteenth century. A vogue for keeping them emerged early in the 1800s and continued as a mark of gentility until the beginning of the twentieth century. Writers of autographs at least until the mid-nineteenth century treated the custom as an opportunity for offering homiletics on such subjects as friendship (“Remember well and bear in mind, / A constant friend is hard to find”). Although some might compose their own messages, most writers probably drew upon traditional materials that originated or were preserved in almanacs, school readers, and collections of sentimental verse. Later in the century, messages became more comic, a trend that has continued until the present.

During the 1900s, the custom of keeping autograph books flourished most among children, who employed a variety of folk rhyme formulas (“Roses are red, / Violets are blue, / There has never been a friend / That’s better than you”) as well as visual manipulations (“U R 2 Good 2 B 4 Gotten”) to memorialize relationships. Sometimes, symbols took the place of a word or concept (a heart substituted for the verb *love* or a “smiley face” representing happiness). Autograph book inscriptions also commented humorously and sometimes sardonically about such concerns as schoolwork and boy-girl relationships. Though writers still stress the importance of friendships, twentieth-century autograph verse is often comically insulting. Inscriptions may be preserved in albums designed especially for

the purpose. Today, school yearbooks, produced even for elementary schools, are designed to accommodate autographed sentiments from one's classmates. In fact, administrators may set aside part of a day at the end of the school year for an "annual" party, during which students write in each other's yearbooks.

Most studies of autograph books published by folklorists have focused entirely on the verses and prose written therein. Changes through time in the nature of the sentiments expressed have received considerable attention. Some attempts also have been made to typologize autograph verse on the basis of form and to view the content of the verse as reflecting the worldview of the writers and collectors. Little attention, though, has been paid to the dynamics of autograph exchange. A study by folklorist Stephen Stern provides some rare insights into why particular children write particular sentiments.

A related autograph book custom involves the collection of signatures from celebrities. Some participants in this custom specialize in particular kinds of celebrities (for instance, country-and-western musicians); others are more general in their approach. Some sites where a number of celebrities may be available for autographs market special books to collect their signatures. The Disney theme parks, for instance, sell books in which children can collect signatures from people dressed in the costumes of Disney characters.

William M. Clements

See Also Children's Folklore; Inscription.

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B

Ballad

Narrative song that is characterized chiefly by concentration on a single episode, dramatic development through dialogue and action, and objective tone, and that is structurally rooted in repetitive verbal patterns and tight, balancing scenes. This definition—which applies mainly to the classical ballad, as distinct from the broadside, native American, and blues ballads—augments only slightly a definition formulated over half a century ago by Gordon Gerould. There is, however, a shift in emphasis in current approaches to the definition. Whereas Gerould attempted to define a substantive body of poetry, as epitomized by the anthologies of Francis James Child and Svend Grundtvig, a contemporary reader focuses on Gerould's attention to stylistic features and argues that balladry should be understood not as a canon of folksongs but as a way of telling a story in song using a particular narrative technique. As a result, contemporary ballad studies show a marked concern for the poetic processes of composition and interpretation, with particular emphasis on the role of formulas and other verbal and structural patterns.



Illustration to the ballad “Young Beckie.”
(Rackham, Arthur. *Some British Ballads*,
1919)

Ballads are found throughout Europe and, as a result of outward European migration, in northern Africa, the Americas, and Australia, with analogues reported in India, the Orient, and Oceania. But the desire to deal with an apparently global tradition is frustrated by the need to grapple with regional forms whose differences are as apparent as their common characteristics. The most obvious distinctions are metrical. In northern Europe, ballads are *stanzaic*, commonly written in rhymed quatrains of alternating tetrameter and trimeter lines or, less frequently, four tetrameter lines. Couplet stanzas, often thought to be an older form, normally have interspersed refrains, whereby they are equivalent to quatrains. By contrast, many southern and eastern European ballads are *stichic* and exhibit varying metrical and acoustic structures: The Spanish *romanceros* are based on octosyllabic verses linked by assonance rather than rhyme; verses in Romanian ballads, normally trochaic trimeter or tetrameter, are subject to considerable variation in metrical length. It should be noted, however, that ballad scansion is variable within the confines of the melody, and rhythm is dictated primarily by four-beat melodic phrases grouped in four-line strophes. Hypermetrical or abbreviated constructions are common enough that it seems quite inappropriate to describe them as “irregular,” and when ballads are sung, inconsistencies that might otherwise be apparent on the printed page are smoothed out.

One might argue here, in light of defining the ballad from the perspective of narration, that prosody is a secondary consideration having little to do with the actual way a story is told. It has been shown, however, that form has a direct bearing on style. Stichic ballads permit expansion and development more easily than strophic ones, and thus they tend to be more descriptive. Since this has implications for how formulas and other repetitive patterns function in the various traditions, researchers attempting to understand the precise details of balladic style have tended to deal with regional forms as distinct entities.

Although it is difficult to generalize about ballads on a broad scale, one can perhaps identify two overarching elements that encompass the most significant stylistic features: (1) a paratactic linking of concise narrative images (noted by David Buchan), the so-called gapped quality of the ballad, and (2) a reliance on repetition. Forgoing descriptive detail and elaborated character or scene development, the ballad tells its story through flashes of imagery, a process M. J. C. Hodgart likened to the cinematic technique of “montage.” Each action and scene is clearly articulated, with actors characteristically frozen in tableau, glancing back over a shoulder, taking the hand of another, shouldering a cape, or peering over a castle wall; Lajos Vargyas described balladry as a poetry of gestures. Many other metaphors applied to the genre also point to its highly concentrated narrative style. Thomas Gray recognized the ballad tendency to “begin in the fifth act,” often at a moment of imminent conflict; from there, it is said to “leap and linger” from one scene to the next. To the overall narrative structure, Wilhelm Grimm applied the analogy of rows of mountain peaks with the valleys between hidden from view. These characterizations, along with such typical

Barbara Allen

Heroine of a ballad composed or adapted from tradition by Allan Ramsey, perhaps as early as 1724 (Oliver Goldsmith [1730–1774] recalled it being sung to him by “our old dairy-maid”). The basic Barbara Allen story, of which numerous variations exist, is of a beautiful woman who scorns the affections of a young man. Unable to bear his rejection, the young man commits suicide. Barbara Allen is overcome with remorse and dies from grief; she usually requests to be buried beside the unrequited lover. The last verse often revolves around the motif of entwined roses growing from the graves of Barbara Allen and her disappointed suitor, a motif also found in other ballads on similar themes. However, tradition supports less clichéd conclusions to the story, as in the version from Percy’s *Reliques* (1765), given by Child (1965):

So this maid she then did dye,
And desired to be buried by him,
And repented herself before she dy’d,
That ever she did deny him.

The apparent over sentimentality of the basic story disappears in the often powerful renditions of good ballad singers. The “died for love” motif is one found in many hero and heroine traditions and is especially favored in ballads. Barbara Allen is still sung widely in Britain, America, and Australia.

Graham Seal

features as a propensity for overstatement and understatement, highlight the degree to which the ballad subscribes to Axel Olrik’s “epic law” of tableaux scenes. Its ideas are clear, focused, and, at the same time, intrinsically dramatic.

Repetition, within individual songs and within the broader tradition, is central to ballad technique. Indeed, Francis Gummere’s notion of incremental repetition (that is, narrative development through sequences of verbally patterned lines, stanzas, or stanza groupings) is a crucial one in that it shows a compositional unity between repetition and the paratactic linkages inherent in ballad structure. Recent Danish scholarship, particularly the work of Flemming Andersen, expands on the idea by showing that repetition has both *static* and *dynamic* functions. Static repetition includes reiterations of a single idea for the sake of intensity—“You lie, you lie, you bonny may / So loud I hear you lie.” With dynamic repetition, the idea behind the pattern is modified in some way, however slightly, so that each iteration moves the narrative forward. This includes both the “progressive” forms, such as incremental repetition, and noncontiguous “recurrent” repetitions, which often act as frames for scenes and larger narrative units. In addition to internal repetition, commonplaces (formulas) and stylized poetic diction intrinsic to each regional tradition are standard generic conventions that further demonstrate the importance of verbal patterning in balladry.

Incremental Repetition

Narrative development through sequential, verbally patterned episodes in which at least one element changes with each progression. The term *incremental repetition* was coined by Francis B. Gummere to refer to clusters of ballad stanzas based on close repetition that move the narrative forward through the introduction of a new idea with each iteration, as in the following statement and response sequence from the opening of “Child Waters” (Child 63B).

‘I warn ye all, ye gay ladies,
That wear scarlet an brown,
That ye dinna leave your father’s house, To follow young men frae town.”O here am I,
a lady gay,
That wears scarlet an brown,
Yet I will leave my father’s house, An follow Lord John frae the town.’

In balladry, there are many variations on the basic concept of incremental repetition. W. F. H. Nicolaisen has shown that the repetitive element ranges from half lines to binary and trinary stanza groupings to sequences of as many as four separate stanzas, as in the murder episodes of the ballad “Babylon” (Child 14). The device, however, is not confined to the ballads and commonly appears in such oral genres as *märchen* and jokes. Though incremental repetition has been regarded mainly as a compositional device, an important one in oral transmission in which patterned units allow for easy learning and recall in performance, it has an important aesthetic function as well. As in the prior example, where the opposition of prohibition and violation creates a dynamic tension, successive repetitions not only advance the narrative but also intensify the conflict, presenting what MacEdward Leach called a “minor climax.” Much of the tension in oral narrative is created and sustained through the artful manipulation of these repetitive patterns.

James Moreira

For the most part, ballad theory has struggled to understand the cultural basis of ballad style. Early in the twentieth century, communal creationists and cultural devolutionists attempted, from contrasting perspectives, to explain ballad style in terms of long-term transmission processes. The debate was finally resolved by the notion of “communal re-creation,” advanced by Cecil Sharp in England and Phillips Barry in the United States. This concept assumed individual authorship but declared it irrelevant to ballad process and focused instead on the continual reshaping of texts through a total interaction between the ballad story, the singer, and his or her community. Philological studies of the same period focused on the genre’s relationship to epic, metrical romance, and other ostensibly medieval forms.

Present research tends to be more synchronically oriented and attempts to locate the role of formulas and other repetitive patterns within the larger framework of ballad poetics. Two main schools of thought have emerged, one focusing on

composition, the other on interpretation. Influenced by Milman Parry and Albert B. Lord's oral-formulaic theory, several scholars have proposed that ballad style emanates from an oral re-creative process. David Buchan's work, in particular, suggests that preliterate ballad makers relied not only on formulaic repetitions but also on complex structuring mechanisms that enabled them to maintain tight control over the organization of stanzas, scenes, and the narrative as a whole. Changes in ballad style at later stages in the tradition are thus seen to result from a literate poetic sensibility, one no longer bound by the patterned conventions of oral art.

Other analyses, such as those by Barre Toelken, Otto Holzapfel, Edith Rogers, and Flemming Andersen, have discovered a tendency for formulas to appear in stable narrative environments. The ideas embodied within the formulas thus become habitually associated with certain narrative events, such that image and action cohere as a compound structural unit. At a basic level, then, the formula foreshadows a certain course of events. From a more dynamic perspective, the two parts of the compound often establish a qualitative tension: The delicateness suggested by "he's taen her by the lily-white hand" contrasts starkly with the brutality of the acts of rape or murder that normally follow this formula. The interplay of image and action drives the narrative forward, often at an accelerated pace, but at each step of the way, ancillary tensions are generated by contrastive associations built into the stereotyped motifs. It is this apparently simple, yet superbly artful way of telling a story in song, that is the essence of balladry.

James Moreira

See Also Folksong, Lyric; Folksong, Narrative; Oral-Formulaic Theory.

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Bard

Originally, an ancient Celtic poet-minstrel, who composed and performed songs eulogizing heroic deeds of chiefs and warriors. In Ireland and in Gaelic-speaking Scotland, the bardic tradition was still alive until the eighteenth century. In Wales, the original tradition disappeared after the Middle Ages but continued in the form of yearly festivals called *Eisteddfod*. An important part of the program consisted of competition in composing poems in the classical poetic devices. Romanticism gave birth to literary products eulogizing the bardic art, such as *The Poems of Ossian* by James Macpherson, *The Bard* by Thomas Gray (1757), and *An Essay on the Ancient Minstrels of England* by Bishop Thomas Percy (1765), and also to organizations and festivals promoting the revitalization of the bardic traditions—for example, the society of Welsh bards *Gorsedd* (founded in 1792), the Irish festival *Oireachtas* organized by the Gaelic League (and held since 1818), and the *Mod*, the equivalent event in Gaelic-speaking Scotland that was organized by the Gaelic Language Society.

In addition, *bard* is often used as a general term for singers and/or composers of (especially) epic folk poetry. The synonyms are *minstrel* or *troubadour*.

In Western Europe, the bardic traditions have left such epic monuments as the *Beowulf* (eighth century CE), the *Nibelungenlied* (thirteenth century CE), and the *Song of Roland* (eleventh century CE). The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* will be treated later in this entry.

In most parts of Europe, the bardic traditions in their oral form disappeared before the nineteenth century. In certain areas along the eastern border of Europe, some of the epic poetry cultures have survived to the present—the south Slavic epics performed by bards called *guslar*, Russian *bylina* poetry, or Finnish *Kalevala* poetry, for example.

South Slavic epic poetry saw centuries of dynamic, productive output that continued well into the twentieth century. The performers of both Finnish and Russian folklore, in the golden age of collection in the nineteenth century, were largely peasants living in remote regions, people engaged in hunting or itinerant occupations. The art of singing was still common in the nineteenth century (and to some extent in the twentieth century), but active professional singing of heroic and mythical songs was on the way out. Female singers performing largely lyric-epic and lyric songs often remained productive longer than their male counterparts.

In spite of the fact that most of the bardic traditions are dying out, there are several epic poetry cultures still alive, especially in various parts of Asia and Africa. The tradition is kept up, in many cases, by the elderly, those of seventy or eighty, and it will die with them. For instance, the epic of *Džangar* is still known among the Oirats in northwest China (Xinjiang), but most of the singers are very old. Formerly, this epic was known among the Kalmyks in the Volga

region, in Mongolia, and also among the Buriats, who inhabit the region around Lake Baikal. The epic of *Geser* was spread mainly within the sphere of Tibetan cultural influence in Tibet, Mongolia, and among the Buriats, and also in Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, and Ladakh. This heroic epic can still be encountered in some rather inaccessible areas. Convincing evidence of existing epics is to be found among various Turkic peoples (e.g., the Kirghiz *Manas*) and also among other peoples living in the Middle East, Central Asia, and Siberia. There are also rich epic poetry cultures in some parts of Southeast Asia and the Indian subcontinent.

Formerly, unfamiliarity with the material and inadequate knowledge of local oral traditions, cultural history, and other relevant contextual information led some scholars to assert that there were no bardic traditions in Africa. At present, there is enough evidence to demonstrate that there are several rich and influential epics in different parts of the continent—for example, the *jeli* (often called *griots*) among the Mande-speaking populations in West Africa, the epics called *mvvet* of Cameroon, Gabon, and Equatorial Guinea, and the *Nyanga* epic from Zaire. The performing of the epics (such as *Sunjiata*) is often only one of the manifold social roles of the bards.

On the basis of new fieldwork methods and materials, it is possible to draw a more complete picture of the art of the bards from all over the world, considering topics such as the variety of epic genres; modes of performance; differences between mythic, historical, and lyric-epic songs, and roles in society. One of the most interesting areas of contemporary research focuses on the coexistence and mutual influence between oral and literary epics and the use of epics in modern culture. In many cases, dominant concepts or ideologies have helped to strengthen the vitality of the impulsive use of epic poetry. This kind of situation also inspired a large number of new epic songs. Bardic poetry has been in constant use as a productive tradition adapting to new situations.

The Problem of Bardic Art and Oral Composition

In 1795, Friedrich Wolf argued in his *Prolegomena ad Homerum* that Homer could not have composed such long poems as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. According to him, the Homeric poems were composed orally in the form of short songs and edited later to obtain the unity they ultimately had. Wolf maintained that the Homeric poems were composed before the Greeks were acquainted with writing. For that reason, he contended, it was not possible to create such long epic texts as the Homeric epos.

Milman Parry and Albert B. Lord suggested that the performers of south Slavic epic songs created their texts in the performance situation by means of formulas, themes, and an overall structure, the “stable skeleton of narrative.” The production of folk poetry varied thus from one performing situation to another—the singers were using a method that Parry and Lord referred to as *composition in performance*.

Parry's basic aim was to prove that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* too were composed orally in a traditional style. South Slavic epic poetry was proved to be oral and traditional. Since the Greek heroic epics also revealed the same type of features of traditionality and orality, Parry and Lord asserted that they were composed using the same mode of composition. In his study *The Singer of Tales*, published in 1960, Lord presented a summary of Parry's theses as well as his own research. It is necessary to note, however, that only the starting point of the Parry-Lord theory was literary in the sense that the authors aimed at solving the classical Homeric question. During the years since Lord's work appeared, this approach, originally devoted to classical literature, has expanded into a universal school. In the bibliography *Oral-Formulaic Theory and Research* by John M. Foley, over 1,800 monographs on materials from more than 90 language areas are mentioned. In addition to the Homeric and south Slavic epic, the advocates of the oral-formulaic school have focused on the Anglo-Saxon *Beowulf*, as well as a number of other classic epics and living traditions.

Milman Parry and Albert Lord's argument can be supported by many bardic traditions. In fact, an oral singer can produce an epic song longer than the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and the Finnish *Kalevala* put together. The Tajik singer of the *Gurguli* epics Hikmet Rizo has sung a version with a total length of 101,596 verses. Sayaqbay Qaralaev, one of the best-known Kirghiz epic singers (*manasci*), has produced a version of the *Manas*-cycle (Manas, Semetey, Seytek) totaling more than half a million verses. Another famous Kirghiz singer, S. Orozbaqov, has produced a version that comprises over 180,000 verses.

By using a set of narrative techniques, a singer is capable of composing long epics without having memorized them or created them beforehand. Singers are able to use this technique to vary and compose long narrative structures during performance. As singers produce their versions of epics, they make use of the line sequences commonly encountered in tradition, some of which are suitable for setting the scene for several plot structures or describing different events, others for rather few entities. In studies of epic singing among various peoples, one often finds mention of singers who are able to repeat a long narrative poem after only a single hearing or rapidly producing a new poem on a given theme.

The singer has at his or her disposal the traditional means of epic poetry: metrical patterns, parallelism, alliteration, rhyme, anaphora, or other devices of diction. During the composition process, the bard elaborates on the song according to his or her own preferences and the circumstance. In order to perform an entire epic song, the singer has to master simultaneously a number of systems. The memory of the singer works on multilevel representations containing features of surface and meaning structure. Formulas, ideas, and images join in a coherent whole; certain scenes and themes include particular details and clusters of forms. As a result of this composition process, bardic art is simultaneously innovative and traditional.

The training of the bard takes place over a long period, involving numerous stages of development. A. B. Lord's account of the south Slavic oral-formulaic learning process is famous. According to Lord, this process consists of three stages. The first is a period of passive listening, during which the singer learns the general themes and plot structures of his region. This stage is followed by a period of practice, during which the singer-to-be, who already knows how to sing, gradually learns to fit the material learned into traditional metrical and musical frameworks. The third stage is the making of the singer: the first performance of an entire song before a critical audience. Albert Lord mentioned the learning capabilities of the Bosnian master singer Avdo Medjević, describing a situation in which another singer—Mumin Vlahovljak—performed a song that Avdo had never heard. After Mumin had finished, Avdo praised the song but stated that he could perform it better. Although Mumin's version was already thousands of lines in length, Avdo's interpretation was even longer. Avdo's poem was more complete than that which Mumin had presented, and it made use of standard elements characteristic of Avdo's repertoire in its construction.

Although the skill of the gifted singer made it possible to improvise on the basis of traditional forms and to repeat a song after hearing it only once, as a general collective expression it was considered that the epic poems had to be repeated in a traditional, standard form. The study of epic poetry nonetheless reveals signs of considerable variation. Among the features of epic poems (and indeed of folklore in general) is a tendency to preserve the linguistic and poetic conventions that have become familiar and primary in the community and also to produce folklore tied to the history, social development, and cultural conditions of the community. One may find abundant examples of these concepts in studies of epic songs among various peoples. In some poetic cultures, the performers generally produce relatively fixed entities (small-scale epics); in others, the singers compile poems by drawing on traditional devices in relatively free combinations (large-scale epics). According to this distinction, Finnish-Karelian and Russian bards normally belong to the former category; the epic poetry of the southern Slavs, especially the Bosnian and the Herzegovinian Muslim singers as well as those in numerous Mongolian and Turkic traditions, belongs largely to the latter category.

In addition, it has to be noted that there are abundant examples of epic traditions in which diverse genres play an important role. Epics in such traditions might contain chapters in verse hagiography or panegyric, prose sections (or prosimetric) forms, fragments of lyric elegy or laments, or even proverbs and riddles.

The mode of performance may be flexible and varied. The singers can perform on various occasions, for different audiences, and they are able to choose the chapter to be performed according to the context. Such "eposes in the making"

clearly show how important it has been to challenge the literary-based concept of the epics and bardic traditions.

Lauri Harvilahti

See Also Ethnopoetics; Folksong, Narrative.

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Beauty and the Beast

“Beauty and the Beast” is one of the most beloved and enduring fairy tales of our time. Although it was first published in 1740 in a French novel for young adults by Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot de Villeneuve, similar animal groom stories existed in the oral tradition of cultures around the world long before. It is possible they took their inspiration from the primitive ritual of sacrificing a virgin to appease a menacing supernatural being or serpent. Beauties and beasts make their appearance in European, rural American, and Native American folklore, as well as in folktales from India, Turkey, Israel, Zimbabwe, China, Indonesia, Jamaica, and Colombia, among others. Some of these tales are quite ancient. However, in a reversal of the more frequent pattern, the existing oral tradition did not influence the literary fairy tale. Instead, Villeneuve’s original story—especially the widely disseminated version of it by Jeanne-Marie Le Prince de Beaumont (1756)—has made a lasting mark on folk narrative.

Fairy Tale

Scholars have suggested that Villeneuve may have taken the general outlines of her novel from two late seventeenth-century antecedents, Marie-Catherine d’Aulnoy’s story “Le Mouton” (“The Ram,” 1698) and Charles Perrault’s



Beauty and the Beast, illustrated by Henry Matthew Brock in 1910. (Archives Charmet/The Bridgeman Art Library International)

“Riquet à la Houppe” (“Riquet with the Tuft,” 1697), in which a beautiful maiden falls in love with an animal or a singularly unattractive man. These tales arose from the salon culture of the second half of the seventeenth century, where it was the custom to invent publishable stories based on motifs from the oral tradition, and they may have mediated between that tradition and Villeneuve’s original work. It is impossible to know the story’s true ancestry.

Nonetheless, it is clear that the plot and details of the tale sprang largely from Villeneuve’s creative imagination and reflected the milieu in which she was writing. Villeneuve’s novel not only tells the story of the meeting, separation, and marriage of Beauty and the Beast but also includes the history of the Beast’s enchantment and the story of Beauty’s genealogy, as well as multiple dream sequences and the involvement of several fairies. Other distinctive features are the elaborate descriptions of the Beast’s palace, the monkeys and parrots who act as Beauty’s servants, the Beast’s forthright request that Beauty sleep with him, and Beauty’s willingness to give up her handsome prince when his mother asserts that this merchant’s daughter is beneath him.

Writing for young French ladies of the rising middle class or the aristocracy, Villeneuve utilized many characteristics of the salon tales of the previous century. Her story features a whole nation of independent and powerful fairies, known as “intelligences,” whose demeanor and values are those of the aristocratic salon women whose culture is under attack in France in the late 1730s. This older generation of women exists in tension with a younger generation represented by Beauty’s fairy mother, who prefers to marry a humble mortal (albeit a king) and raise her family on Happy Island, living out the new bourgeois ideal

best exemplified by the social theories of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Thus, even as it demonstrates what it means to be beautiful and heroic, Villeneuve's tale reflects a contemporary shift in social mores and presents a new set of ideals for women that conflict with the norms of the recent past.

Villeneuve's literary tale was quickly taken up by others. Beaumont eliminated most of the novel's subplots when she turned it into a concise didactic tale for children. The family histories, most of the dream sequences, and all but one of the fairies are gone, and a less-sexualized Beast now asks Beauty to be his wife. Beauty's humility, patience, generosity, kindness, and hard work are repeatedly underscored, while moral commentary rounds out the tale, as in the final statement that perfect happiness is "founded on virtue." Translated almost immediately into English and many other languages and distributed throughout Europe (from Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Iceland, Poland, and Russia to Greece, Italy, Czechoslovakia, and Spain), Beaumont's version was largely responsible for the diffusion of the tale and became the standard referent for most subsequent retellings, in both folk and literary traditions.

The nineteenth century saw the proliferation of versions of all sorts, some of them beautifully illustrated (and existing largely for the sake of the illustrations), others in inexpensive chapbook form. Some—most notably *Beauty and the Beast, or a Rough Outside with a Gentle Heart, A Poetical Version of an Ancient Tale* (1811), attributed to Charles Lamb—were in verse. Not all the retellings were intended for children: Albert Smith's satirical rhymed version, illustrated by Alfred Crowquill, features cartoon images of Beauty's father and sisters and claims to imitate "the Annual, Album, or Fashion-Book line." James Robinson Planché's theatrical take on the tale, *Beauty and the Beast: A Grand, Comic, Romantic, Operatic, Melodramatic, Fairy Extravaganza in Two Acts* (1841), is an ironic and punning spoof in rhyming couplets for an adult audience. The slight Oriental flavor in Planché's play—in the name of the Beast/Prince, Azor—is inspired by late eighteenth-century French versions and lingers in several twentieth-century tales.

Most nineteenth-century retellings take off from Beaumont, but one of the best known and most influential—Andrew Lang's "Beauty and the Beast," which appeared in the *Blue Fairy Book* (1889)—is a radical abridgement of Villeneuve. The *Blue Fairy Book* was so popular that it was reprinted well into the mid-twentieth century by Longman, Green, a publisher known for its Supplemental Reading series for schools. As this development suggests, by the end of the nineteenth century the separation between the literary tale for adults and the moralizing fairy tale for children—begun when Beaumont rewrote Villeneuve's tale—was complete.

Folktale Variants

The proliferation of literary and children's versions of "Beauty and the Beast" in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries paralleled the dissemination of the

folktale variants. “Beauty and the Beast” is the eponymous example of tale type 425C in the Aarne-Thompson-Uther index of international folktales. This is one of several variants of the tale-type cycle known as The Search for the Lost Husband (AT 425), another variant of which is the myth of Cupid and Psyche (linked to both AT 425A, The Animal as Bridegroom, and to AT 425B, Son of the Witch). It is easy to see the kinship between these two tales. Both involve the meeting of the supernatural or enchanted groom and the beautiful girl, their separation as a result of the girl’s transgression, and their ultimate reunion. Unlike the Cupid and Psyche tale, however, where the emphasis is on the breaking of the taboo that forbids the young woman to look at her husband (the god of love), “Beauty and the Beast” emphasizes the animal qualities of the groom and his ultimate transformation from a monster into a human being.

The similarity and differences between “Beauty and the Beast” and “Cupid and Psyche” are representative of the relationship among variants of a single tale type. Thus, the many folktale versions of “Beauty and the Beast” exhibit different characters and motifs while adhering to a basic structural pattern. For example, they may describe the beast as a bear, dog, serpent, pig, or other creature; explain the meeting of the groom and the maiden as unwitting or intended; and cite different taboos and different means for disenchanting the beast.

In the Russian tale “The Enchanted Tsarevitch,” the groom is a three-headed snake. The father meets the reptile when he retrieves a flower for his daughter and promises to give the snake whatever he first encounters when he arrives home; unwittingly, he has promised the girl. After several nights in the company of the snake, who comes to sleep in her bed, the girl returns home, where her older sisters convince her to stay too long. When she returns to the snake, he is lying dead in a pond, but her kisses revive him and transform him into a handsome prince, whom she marries.

In the Appalachian tale “A Bunch of Laurel Blooms for a Present,” the girl voluntarily goes to the house of a witch in place of her father, who is being punished for picking flowers to give to his daughter. The witch installs the girl in a little house, where a huge toad-frog is her companion. He is kind to the girl, he cooks and keeps house, and, when she is asleep, he sheds his warty skin and becomes a handsome young man. One night the girl burns the skin, lifting the witch’s spell, and the pair lives happily together among the laurel blooms. In this tale there is no transgression.

As these examples indicate, except for a few core elements involving family relationships and symbolic objects, the folktale, like the literary tale, is susceptible to an infinite number of variations.

Artistic Legacy

In addition to its oral transmission, “Beauty and the Beast” has been carried forward in a remarkable number of works of art. It has been made into many plays,

often for performance by young people, and it has given rise to at least two operas, *Zémire et Azor* by Jean-François Marmontel and André-Ernest-Modeste Grétry (created in 1771 at Fontainebleau and recreated as recently as 2003 in Liège) and Robert Moran's *Desert of Roses*, which premiered in Houston, Texas, in 1992. Two famous films—Jean Cocteau's *La Belle et la Bête* (1946) and the Walt Disney Company's *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)—are based on the tale. It was featured in a television series (1987–1990) in the United States and also in a Disney-produced musical on Broadway. Finally, this vital narrative has been retold in feminist and science-fiction versions that reflect the changing mores of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

Angela Carter's short story "The Tiger's Bride" (1979), imagines that a man loses his daughter and all his other possessions to a beast in a game of cards. The beautiful young woman (who displays her feistiness and feminist turn of mind as she narrates her adventure) is transferred to the beast's abode, a run-down palazzo in wintry northern Italy, where the horses are housed in the ruined dining room and the beast sleeps in a rudimentary den. The plot reverses the original storyline when the young virgin, rather than the beast, undergoes a transformation, shedding her clothes and eventually her skin to become a tiger like her mate.

In Tanith Lee's "Beauty" (1983), a science-fiction tale that challenges racism and homophobia, Estár, the third daughter of Mercator Levin, undergoes a process of growing self-awareness and sexual awakening when she is transported to the dwelling of an alien who has a muscular catlike form. Always the outsider in her own family, she quickly adapts to her new surroundings and feels love for this beast, who seems to read her mind. As the story unfolds, Estár learns the secrets of this alien race and discovers that, although her outward appearance is different, she is one of them. She has been summoned home—to her real home among the black, leonine "aliens"—by the delivery of an unusual rose.

Although critics such as Jack Zipes have decried the way "Beauty and the Beast" and other classic fairy tales have been taken over by the culture industry and turned into uninspiring romances or cute animated films for blatantly commercial purposes, the retellings by Carter and Lee suggest that there are still people of various ages who want to create and read provocative new imaginings of the story.

Symbolism and Significance

There is no single, straightforward way to explain what makes "Beauty and the Beast" so durable. Scholars disagree about its significance and the reasons for its widespread and longstanding appeal.

As it has evolved, the story's significance has changed. In its original outlines, "Beauty and the Beast" may have delighted audiences with its image of a potentially open society in which middle-class daughters could marry aristocratic

husbands who respected them and women could choose to enter into marriage more or less freely. In Villeneuve's novel, Beauty's actions (unlike Psyche's) are never commanded or forced. In a way that is difficult for present-day readers to comprehend, the original "Beauty and the Beast" reflects the eighteenth-century emphasis on individual rights and freedoms—and tentatively suggests that they might even be extended to women.

However, the Beast's passivity and Beauty's agency are not always central in the modern tales, even in the feminist retellings. Instead, some recent literary versions of the story emphasize issues of self-awareness and psychological development that are more in keeping with the theories of adolescence engendered in the wake of Sigmund Freud. Some promote acceptance of racial or sexual others and teach that fear stems from resisting knowledge and difference. "Beauty and the Beast" has always been a vehicle for its authors' social or political messages or the popular ideas of their time.

Setting aside this inevitable updating of the story, however, certain elements remain and ensure the tale's underlying stability. These are the persistent archetypes and symbolic objects that allow audiences to recognize the story despite its shifting external and time-bound trappings. Instead of being situated in a particular time and place, the action is removed from any locatable reality and becomes dreamlike. In most versions, the Beast's residence is surrounded by a garden that could be a kind of Eden; or it may be in a remote part of northern Italy, or in an alien compound somewhere on earth.

Furthermore, the fact that the principal characters are named for abstract qualities (Beauty) or generic beings (Beast) makes them available as types, rather than particular individuals, and signals the universal, allegorical import of the tale. Even in a modern retelling such as Lee's, where the names are changed, their abstraction is maintained: the Beauty figure, Estár, translates as "Psyche," and the Alien is said to have a name that can only be intuited, not uttered or written.

Perhaps most important, basic family relationships form the core of the tale, which wrestles with the problem of exogamy, or marrying out. The daughter must make a successful transition from living with her father to entering into an adult relationship with another man. The flower the girl requests, which leads to her meeting with the Beast, symbolizes this transition. It can be understood either as a figure for male power, which is in play between the father and his daughter's suitor, or as a sign of the young woman's sexual innocence, which will soon be lost. In the end, the tale's durability may be due to the very fact that its meanings are not spelled out; they are not fixed once and for all.

Virginia E. Swain

See Also Cinderella; Fairy Tale Heroes; Shape-Shifters; Sleeping Beauty; Snow White.

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Belief, Folk

A broad genre of folklore that includes expressions and behaviors variously called superstition, popular belief, magic, the supernatural, old wives' tales, folk medicine, folk religion, weather signs, planting signs, conjuration, hoodoo, root work, portents, omens, charms, and taboos.

Alan Dundes has formulated a structural definition of folk belief (underlying patterns remain the same even if the content changes) in order to avoid the pejorative connotations of many of the terms just listed. Superstitions are traditional expressions that have conditions and results (if a black cat crosses a person's path, he or she will have bad luck; a halo around the moon means rain the next day). In some superstitions, the conditions are causal (the black cat is the cause of bad luck), and in some, they are not (the halo is a sign of rain, not the cause of it). The belief that spilling salt means bad luck has a cause condition (spilling the salt) and a result (bad luck). Since spilling the salt causes the bad luck, a conversion ritual is possible—in this case, throwing the salt over one's shoulder in order to negate the bad luck.

The underlying structure is not always apparent in the spoken belief, as in the widespread expression "knock on wood." The cause condition here is not spoken but is part of the context of behavior. Someone says, "I've been driving for thirty years and never had an accident" and follows with "knock on wood." The unspoken cause condition and result—that is, that saying an event has not happened will actually cause it to happen—shows the magic power of uttering words. The only expressed structural element is the conversion ritual—knocking on wood—which then negates the result element—an accident taking place. This example also illustrates the need to examine the behavioral context in order to understand the folk belief; the verbal expression only contains a part of the meaning of the event. Using the structural definition helps us to better see the contextual elements and to avoid making judgments about the people who practice the belief.

Luck

The belief that human activities are determined by chance. Luck is a significant idea in folklore studies, not just in the obvious area of folk belief but also in other genres such as legends, proverbs, and children's games. Luck and chance are reflected in folk expressions because of human concerns with fate, with uncertainties in life, and with control of those uncertainties. Attitudes toward luck will vary depending on different cultural contexts, specific social situations, and individual concerns.

The proverb "Work hard and you shall be rewarded" suggests a straightforward value of achievement, but the existence of other proverbs in the same culture such as "Who knows what tomorrow will bring?" indicates a qualification of the first value and a tension in cultural worldview. Luck and chance modify the value of the work ethic: "Work hard and you *may not* be rewarded." Buried treasure legends seem to express what Alan Dundes has called the folk idea of unlimited good since the stories usually end with the treasure not being found; it is still waiting for someone willing to work hard and find it. However, treasure tales often emphasize luck rather than hard work as the reason for a treasure being found, so there is a qualification of the work ethic. Children's treasure hunts reflect some of these same concerns.

Because of the chance element in human endeavors, folk traditions provide means to control one's luck—folk beliefs, rituals, and charms—especially in areas of life where there is more uncertainty. Gambling is a good example: Racetrack bettors, poker players, and lottery players are notorious for being superstitious—trying to control their luck by wearing charms, cutting the cards in a certain way, arriving at the track at a certain time, playing numbers that they dream about, and so forth.

Scientific and technological advances probably have given humans a greater sense of control of their lives, but as long as there is some uncertainty in existence, the folklore of luck will be found.

Patrick B. Mullen

Folklorists and anthropologists who studied superstition in the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century definitely were making judgments about the tradition bearers of folk belief. One school of thought saw superstitions as survivals of primitive rituals, so that knocking on wood, for instance, would be based on an appeal to vegetation gods. The problem with this theory is that it is not based on evidence of actual belief or behavior in the past; rather, it is a hypothesis that works backward from present-day evidence. Also, the survivalist theory does not tell us much about belief in practice in present-day situations; people who knock on wood are not aware of appealing to vegetation gods. Earlier scholars associated superstitions with the peasantry in rural environments, which caused them to neglect the study of superstitious behavior in urban, industrial, or middle- and upper-class environments. There was an implicit condescension toward the bearers of folk belief as the "other," groups of people whose culture suffered arrested development.

Evil Eye

An ancient belief, still commonly held, that certain people can cause damage to something valuable by gazing at it. In the third century CE, Heliodorus wrote, “When anyone looks at what is excellent with envious eye he fills the surrounding atmosphere with a pernicious quality and transmits his own envenomed exhalations into whatever is nearest him.” The common view, as illustrated here, has been that the eye is a source, rather than a receptor, of light and other emanations.

It is widely reported that envy is the motivating force behind the evil eye. That is, the malefactor sees something desirable, experiences envy, and emits a force from his or her eyes that damages the object. It is usually people (most often, a child or a bride), crops, or animals that are harmed, and it is the excellent or beautiful that is most at risk. Also, the damage is usually specific, not general; the evil eye is responsible for children failing to thrive or cows going dry, rather than for famines or droughts. The person who casts the evil eye, however, may not be aware that he or she has this power. Often, suspicion falls on particular individuals because they are outsiders or have a distinctive look to them, such as eyes of a color different from the norm or eyebrows that meet in the middle.

Because envy motivates the evil eye, expressions of admiration may be seen as dangerous and either be avoided or followed by reciting a formula (e.g., “God bless him”) or committing an act intended to avert the evil, such as spitting on or touching the supposed victim (or even touching spit onto the victim) or perhaps giving the praised object to the person who praised it. Reversals are often reported: One may deliberately call a pretty child ugly or, in dressing a child, turn a sock inside out so as to ward off the evil eye.

Such protection takes many forms. Often, something is put near or on the enviable object to draw the gaze, such as a smudge of dirt or a colored ribbon or thread. The colors and objects vary by area: a black goat’s tail or pot in Morocco, blue beads in rural Greece, the red *mano cornuta* (or horned hand) among Italian-Americans. Because the point of these objects is either to attract the gaze—thereby deflecting it from the vulnerable person or animal—or to ward off the evil, both the obscene (phalluses) and the holy (crucifixes) can serve for protection.

Paul Barber

Folklorists have long recognized the need for a neutral term to designate traditional beliefs in order to avoid ethnocentric bias in studying human behavior. In 1930, Alexander Krappe wrote, “Superstition, in common parlance, designates the sum of beliefs and practices shared by other people in so far as they differ from our own. What we believe and practise [sic] ourselves is, of course, Religion.” More recently, in 1977, Lawrence W. Levine noted that “in the cultures from which the [African American] slaves came, phenomena and activities that we might be tempted to dismiss as ‘superstitious’ were legitimate and important modes of comprehending and operating within a universe perceived of in sacred terms. To distinguish these activities and beliefs from religion is a meaningless exercise.” Religious beliefs and folk beliefs may be similar in terms of structure

and function; their differences lie in the way they are perceived by different groups. As many folklorists have pointed out, folk beliefs are found not just among isolated, uneducated, or exotic groups but among all peoples.

Given the diversity and cross-cultural spread of folk belief, one of the central problems in the scholarship in this field is classification. What scheme will be able to handle the seemingly unending variety of topics and examples from different cultures all around the world? Wayland D. Hand formulated a classification based on “the cycle of life,” which has proven useful in organizing folk belief collections. The categories are: (1) birth, infancy, childhood; (2) human body, folk medicine; (3) home, domestic pursuits; (4) economic, social relationships; (5) travel, communication; (6) love, courtship, marriage; (7) death and funereal customs; (8) witchcraft, ghosts, magical practices; (9) cosmic phenomena: times, numbers, seasons; (10) weather; (11) animals, animal husbandry; (12) fishing and hunting; (13) plants, plant husbandry; and (14) miscellaneous. These categories are subdivided into more specific topics—for instance, the fourth category (economic, social relationships) is divided into (a) prosperity, wealth; (b) works, trades, professions; (c) religion; (d) friends, enemies; (e) recreation, sports, games; and (f) lying, thievery, legal guilt, murder, etcetera. The stuff of human drama, this list gives some idea of the range of topics and concerns that make up folk belief.

The cycle of life classification system is based on the concept of the rite of passage as formulated by Arnold van Gennep. Rites of passage take place at points in the life cycle where important transitions from one stage of life to another occur. Ritual and magic tend to be concentrated at these points to aid in the transition; Hand’s classification system illustrates this with major categories of folk belief located at birth, marriage, and death. In many circumstances, folk belief as part of human cultural activity can only be understood as it relates to ritual. For example, beliefs about marriage are often expressed as part of the ritual of weddings, so that the traditions of throwing rice at the newly married couple or wearing “something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue” have to be studied in terms of the overall customs and behavior associated with the wedding itself.

In the past, folklorists tended to collect superstitions as statements of belief without exploring related behavior or varying degrees of belief, concentrating on texts and ignoring contexts. Developments in the anthropological study of magic and ritual, specifically the work of Bronislaw Malinowski and other functionalists, have caused folklore research in folk belief to become more contextual. Malinowski conducted fieldwork on magic and ritual among Trobriand Islanders, and out of this research, he formulated the anxiety-ritual theory: Wherever there is uncertainty in life, anxiety will arise, and magic and ritual will be used to gain a sense of control. Numerous researchers have pointed out how the anxiety-ritual theory applies to various occupational groups involved with high-risk work. For instance, the research of Patrick B. Mullen indicates that commercial fishermen have a system of occupational folk belief that helps them to cope with the

physical and financial risks of their work. When they start out on a long fishing trip in potentially dangerous waters, they perform rituals such as throwing coins overboard, they avoid saying words such as *alligator* or *rabbit*, and they avoid particular actions such as turning the hatch cover upside down in order to ensure a safe and profitable trip. The pattern of anxiety and ritual can be observed among athletes involved in big games, actors on opening night, students taking exams, and lovers who are suspicious of their mates—in other words, among any group or in any individual who faces any form of uncertainty and anxiety.

Scholars have criticized this functional explanation of superstitious behavior because it concentrates on abstract cultural forces as determinants of behavior to the exclusion of varying individual causes. The idea that folklore, in this case folk belief, is only a reflection of preexisting cultural patterns such as anxiety-ritual oversimplifies the complex ways in which folklore can be an imaginative means of dealing with life. Folk belief in a specific context can serve many other individual needs as well as relieve anxiety. For instance, some commercial fishermen who work as deckhands have been known to follow the traditional occupational belief in throwing coins overboard to buy wind in order to get off work early, and coal miners who do not want women working in the mines can cite the traditional belief that women are bad luck in mines. In both cases, folk belief is used in individual creative ways as part of strategies to control specific situations, not to relieve anxiety. A person who expresses a folk belief may not actually believe it and may be using it to parody another's behavior, to challenge accepted rules rather than reinforce them. In order to comprehend the multiple meanings and functions of folk belief, we have to examine the specific circumstances in which it occurs, noting such features as verbal expression, behavior, responses of others present, and so forth.

Recently, folklorists have begun to apply performance theory to the study of folk belief in order to get at the ways in which expressions of belief do more than simply reflect worldview but actually help to reconstruct the culture itself. Folk belief as part of a dynamic, ongoing tradition is not static but continually undergoing change as individuals adapt received knowledge to specific circumstances. Performance theory provides an approach for examining the nuances of verbal expression and behavior when superstitions are discussed or acted upon. Definitions of folklore from a performance perspective seem to exclude folk belief since they emphasize *artistic* communication and the utterance of a belief or the practicing of a superstition is not ordinarily thought of as an artistic expression. An argument could be made that these behaviors contain an artistic component in that they often depend on metaphor and analogy, but even if they are not artistic communication, they are subject to certain formulas and framing devices, in performance terms, the keys that set them off from other kinds of expressions and establish clues to their rhetorical purpose. Gary R. Butler has done extensive research on folk belief in a French Newfoundland community, applying concepts of performance to identify and analyze narrative and conversation frames in the “discourse of belief.”

As Butler and others have discovered, folk beliefs are often expressed in other genres of folklore, such as narratives (memorates and legends), customs, rituals, foodways, proverbs, and rhymes. Examples of the cross-genre nature of folk belief also indicate the cross-cultural pervasiveness of superstitious behavior. Memorates are stories told from a first- or secondhand point of view with a belief at their core—for instance, a story about a personal encounter with a ghost would be a memorate because the belief in ghosts is essential to the narrative. A story one tells about a friend walking under a ladder and then being hit by a car also would be classified as a memorate because it is based on a superstition. The storyteller does not necessarily have to believe in the core folk belief; for example, a person could tell about starting a trip on Friday and having good luck on the trip, a story that would counter the traditional belief in Friday as an unlucky day. Often, folk beliefs are expressed in narrative form to prove or disprove them.

Legends are usually removed from the first- or secondhand point of view of the memorate; they are told about events in the past that were not observed by the teller or someone the teller knows. In addition, certain kinds of legends also have folk belief at their core. The legend of the Flying Dutchman is about a ship doomed to sail the seas for eternity because of the actions of a blasphemous captain. The central belief here is that blasphemy (the cause condition in structural terms) can bring about a supernatural punishment (the result), indicating an area where religious and folk beliefs overlap.

Customs and rituals also contain folk beliefs that are essential to their meanings. The aforementioned wedding customs have many beliefs associated with them, mostly ones meant to guarantee good luck for the bride and groom as they begin a new stage of life. Folk beliefs are also an integral part of holiday customs, where they often intersect with foodways. In the southern United States among certain groups, there is a custom of eating black-eyed peas (always made with salt pork) on New Year's Day to ensure good luck for the rest of the year, an example that illustrates how belief, custom, and foodways interact. Beliefs exist as folk knowledge and are then put into practice as customary behavior. It is through the behavior that the belief itself is usually learned; a child may never hear that it is good luck to have black-eyed peas on New Year's but will learn the belief when the dish is served. A novice coal miner may not hear that it is bad luck to whistle in the mine until he whistles and is fired for breaking the taboo. Folk beliefs do not exist solely in the abstract but also in actual practice and behavior. Again, folklore is not merely a reflection of an abstract cultural worldview; it exists in everyday life as a means of creating culture.

Often, folk beliefs are expressed as proverbs or rhymes in situations in which such communication is appropriate. Weather signs can be more easily remembered and passed on if they are given in the form of a rhyme: "Red sun at night, sailor's delight; red sun at morning, sailor's take warning." Children's rhymes sometimes have expression of folk belief in them, such as "Step on a crack, and you'll break

Omen/Portent

Folk beliefs that are signs of future events. Some of these can be controlled and some cannot. Weather signs, such as a halo around the moon predicting rain, are indicators of weather changes that cannot be controlled by humans; by contrast, spilling salt is an omen of bad luck that can be altered by the conversion ritual of throwing the salt over one's shoulder.

Omens and portents have been widely employed as devices in literature, from Shakespeare's soothsayer warning "Beware the ides of March" in *Julius Caesar* to Mark Twain's Huck Finn accidentally flipping a spider into a flame in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Huck used a conversion ritual, turning around three times and crossing his breast each time, to ward off the bad luck, but he still feared the evil consequences. Shakespeare and Twain had the ethnographer's sense of how omens influence human behavior and the artist's sense of how they work for dramatic purposes.

Some omens come about of their own accord, and others are believed to appear at the behest of a witch, medicine man, or prophet attempting to divine the future. Divination can be as formal as a shaman reading the entrails of a dead animal for omens of the future or as informal as a young lover plucking the petals of a daisy, "She loves me, she loves me not." Popular manifestations of consulting omens include palm reading, tea-leaf reading, and astrological reading of the stars.

Everyday folk beliefs are full of omens that, depending on degree of belief, can affect people's behavior. Dropping a dishcloth is a sign that a visitor is coming; an itchy palm means that you will receive money; an aching joint can mean that a storm is coming. Other omens predict death or disaster: a bat flying into a room, a meteor falling, a certain bird or animal calling after dark. Omens range in consequence from the everyday to the cosmological and are found across the spectrum of expressive culture, from shamans to Shakespeare.

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your mother's back." Some children may believe this to the extent that it affects their behavior: While walking down a sidewalk, they will avoid stepping on any cracks out of fear that they may hurt their mothers. An expression such as "An apple a day keeps the doctor away" is also a folk medical belief that has come to be expressed in the fixed form of a traditional proverb. "Rats leave a sinking ship" can be used as a metaphorical proverb to express contempt for someone who abandons a failing project, but it is also a folk belief, an omen of impending disaster.

Omens, portents, and signs indicate human concern with the uncertainty of the future; science cannot predict what the future holds, but folk belief provides ways for people to believe they can foretell future events. We have everything from astrology, numerology, tarot cards, and palm reading to Ouija boards, children's games, and jump rope rhymes for predicting the future. Many of these devices could be thought of as divination rituals, ways of divining the future. For example, children make folk toys out of folded paper, which they then inscribe with predictions and color codes. By moving the folded paper with their fingers a

certain number of times and identifying colors within, they can predict whom they will marry, what kind of cars they will drive, what kind of houses they will live in, and so forth. Children's traditional play activities often have underlying belief elements that help to explain the child's concerns and developing worldview.

Folk beliefs are often part of complex cultural processes that involve not only belief but also values and other behaviors and that find expression in different genres of folklore. The widespread cross-cultural belief in the evil eye is expressed verbally as a direct statement, through gestures and sayings as a conversion ritual, and through elaborate cures to take away the effects of the evil eye; underlying this complex of behaviors are certain values that help to explain its meanings. Known in Spanish as *mal de ojo* and in Italian as *mal'occhio* and found throughout the Mediterranean and other parts of the world settled by ethnic groups from the Mediterranean region, the concept of the evil eye varies from culture to culture, but certain patterns persist. Often, the evil eye is given unintentionally by someone who is praising a person or an object. "What a beautiful vase on your mantel," someone remarks; two days later, the vase falls and breaks. "What a darling little girl," comments another; the next day, the child becomes ill, and the doctors cannot diagnose what is wrong with her. The evil eye may be the cause, according to folk belief.

The underlying value that seems to inform the belief and the behavior lies in the importance of envy. The assumption is that to praise a person or an object is an indirect expression of envy. The belief in the power of the evil eye is actually, then, a warning against envy because even the unconscious feeling of envy can cause destruction and illness. The cultures that have a belief in the evil eye also have folkloric means of dealing with it; there are conversion rituals that, when used with expressions of praise, can prevent the evil eye from having an effect. For example, in Puerto Rico, if one praises a young girl, one also touches her lightly on the head to ward off the evil eye. Among Italian-Americans, the praise is accompanied by a blessing: "What a darling little girl; God bless her." There are also traditional cures for the evil eye in Italian and Italian-American culture. A bowl of water is placed near the person suspected of having an illness caused by the evil eye, oil is dropped into the water, and words from Scripture are recited. The movement of the oil indicates the efficacy of the cure. In a large city in the northern United States, an Italian American woman has even performed the cure over the telephone, indicating the way folk belief adapts to technological change. Since the ritual involves both healing and religion, the evil eye can be studied as both a medical and a religious phenomenon.

Folk medicine and folk religion are major areas of study in themselves, but both are fundamentally concerned with the study of belief and associated behavior. Folk medical beliefs or folk cures are traditional ways of dealing with health problems. They are often used in conjunction with scientific medicine, and, in fact, there is no clear distinction between folk and scientific medicine in terms of efficacy. Herbal cures, for instance, have been tested by traditional usage over long periods of time and are often found to have an empirical basis when

examined scientifically. Studies of folk medicine have concentrated on rural and isolated areas that do not offer easy access to medical facilities; these communities have a correspondingly greater dependency on folk medical practices. Here, as with many other kinds of folk belief, the belief itself may be carried forward in narrative form. Mary Lozier, who lived for years in an isolated hollow in the mountains of Kentucky, told the story of her young son being bitten by a deadly copperhead snake. The boy's grandmother knew of a traditional poultice made from chopped onions, which she placed on the snakebite to draw out the poison. By the time the boy's father, John, came home with the car, the boy was able to run out to meet him to tell him he was bitten by a snake. The narrative indicates a strong degree of belief, describes the actual practice of the belief in a specific situation, and serves to pass on the tradition to listeners.

Other studies of folk medicine show that when rural people migrate to cities, they take their folk practices with them and adapt them to the new environment. An Appalachian migrant in Detroit will not be able to gather wild yellowroot, which is used for coughs and colds, but she can often find packaged ground yellowroot at the drugstore. Because of a traditional distrust of doctors and hospitals, some ethnic groups turn to folk medicine even when other forms of medicine are available. Mexican-Americans in south Texas continue to consult traditional healers, *curanderos*, for such problems as *susto*, a sickness caused by a magic spell, because medical doctors might dismiss such a cause as ignorant superstition. Many Native Americans still prefer traditional medicine men to non-Native American doctors for religious reasons and cultural identity.

Faith healing is an area in which folk medicine and folk religion overlap since religious belief is the foundation for the curing process. Various forms of faith healing exist in different religions and cultures: The healing may be done by an individual within the church who has healing powers, or self-healing may be accomplished through prayer. Jesse Hatcher, an elderly African American man from the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, told visitors to his farm of the time he prayed to God to heal a goiter on his neck and found the goiter gone the next day. The memorate is once again the means of expressing belief by giving evidence in support of it.

Weather and planting signs are used to determine future courses of action. Weather beliefs usually have the sign condition structure since the conditions on which they are based are not seen as causal. Cloud formations, sunspots, wind direction, and halos around the moon do not cause the weather to change but rather are indications that help to predict the weather. Weather beliefs are not usually designed to attempt to control the weather but are used in outdoor occupations such as farming and fishing to plan activities ahead of time. Planting signs are used by farmers and gardeners to determine the best time to plant particular crops. Farmers' almanacs are important in this tradition because they print the signs of the zodiac in relation to the calendar. By consulting the almanac, the farmer will know what crops to plant under which signs in order to grow the biggest and best

crops. As with folk medicine, planting by the signs is often used in conjunction with current scientific agricultural techniques.

These examples from rural and ethnic groups should not be taken as an indication that folk belief is confined to cultures outside the mainstream; there is copious evidence to suggest that folk beliefs and associated behaviors are widespread throughout the population—at all income and education levels, in urban and suburban environments, and in technological fields of endeavor. Alan Dundes pointed out the influence of the magic number three on scientific and medical patterns and in academic textbooks. So-called New Age activities are another area in which folk beliefs currently are being widely practiced. Many New Age beliefs are borrowed from other cultures, such as the Native American culture, or are revived based on historical records of pre-Christian religions. We find educated, middle-class people in urban areas carrying crystals in pockets or purses in order to ensure good luck in their daily lives or people practicing ancient forms of belief such as Wicca, calling themselves witches. These new forms of traditional behavior have not been widely studied by folklorists, but they should be seriously examined by scholars interested in folk belief as part of human behavior.

The study of folk belief has come a long way from the nineteenth-century concern with primitive survivals to the late-twentieth-century concern with everyday behavior, from a model based on the progress of civilization to a model based on the social construction of reality. The early scholars thought of themselves as



Sonja Kulmitzer, a self-described witch who runs the School of Witchcraft, uses a pendulum over a map to find energy lines, October 22, 2002, in Klagenfurt, Austria. (AP/Wide World Photos)

standing at the most developed point of civilization, examining inferior modes of thought of primitives and peasants. Contemporary scholars see *themselves* as practicing certain forms of folk belief, constructing their scholarly schemes for ordering the world in some of the same ways others use religion or folk belief to construct their own patterns. The anxiety-ritual theory, after all, fits the structural pattern of superstition with a cause condition (uncertainty) and a result (magic). This scholarly paradigm shift has taken place over a century of time, and many of the insights into folk belief, culture, and human behavior are still ahead of us if the model of progress has any validity at all.

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See Also Belief Tale; Charm; Divination; Medicine, Folk; Religion, Folk.

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Belief Tale

Folk narratives that, in the context of their telling, have degrees of belief as a factor. Folklorists classify folk narratives into a multitude of categories (genres) that overlap and cause confusion because these genres are based on different principles,

such as content (themes, motifs, concepts, and ideas), context (degree of belief, social function, and distance between storyteller and audience), and texture (point of view, imagery, tone, and other stylistic variables). *Belief tale* is sometimes used as a term synonymous with *legend* because *legend*, in its broadest sense, is thought of as a story in which belief is a contextual factor that is either wholly or partially believed or rejected. Some folklorists define *belief tales* more narrowly as stories about the supernatural and distinguish them from historical legends about individuals and events. The classification problem in this case arises from using content and context in inconsistent ways; the broad category is based on context (belief), and the narrow is based on content (supernatural events).

Another problem is that the classification systems often combine etic categories, imposed from the outside by scholars, and emic ones, based on native distinctions. A particular story may be told as a joke in certain circumstances (emic), but based on the scholars' examination of content, it may be classified as a belief tale (etic). For instance, old sailors tell a story about a man who was becalmed while out on his sailboat; he followed an ancient folk belief and threw a half-dollar overboard to buy wind. The wind came, blew his sails and mast down, and overturned the boat, and his wife and children were drowned. The same basic story is often told without the tragic ending and with a punch line: "If you get that much wind for a half-dollar, fifteen cents' worth would have been plenty." Both stories contain the core folk belief about buying the wind, but the first story would be classified as a legend or belief tale by a folklorist, and the second story, with the same content except for the ending, would be called a joke by storyteller and audience alike.

The classification of belief tales is further complicated by shifting points of view. The story on buying the wind is told about an event that happened in the past and was not observed by the storyteller or by someone he or she knew. Because the event was removed from the experience of the storyteller, folklorists classify it as a legend, as opposed to a memorate—that is, a belief tale based on first- or secondhand personal experience. If someone tells a story about his or her own experience of throwing coins overboard to buy wind, then that narrative is a memorate. But, we might ask, who cares about this distinction? Certainly, the persons telling the stories do not care what folklorists label their narratives; again, we have the problem of scholarly categories not having much to do with actual behavior in specific situations.

Folklorists are now more interested in the processes of tradition, the ways in which belief, behavior, and storytelling about belief interact in everyday life. Telling ghost stories may serve to reinforce a belief in ghosts, or it may make fun of the belief in ghosts. Stories about supernatural events can help to relieve anxiety over fears of the unknown and provide ways of expressing emotions that may be difficult to articulate directly. For example, some people tell of visitations by the recently deceased. Often, the spiritual visitor reassures the person

about the afterlife and advises the loved one not to mourn excessively. The belief tales based on these experiences help the person to cope with the loss and get through the mourning period.

The belief tale concentrates on inexplicable experiences in human life and helps to explain the mysterious and unknown. Whether the stories are ancient ones passed down as legends or new ones based on personal experience in the recent past, they are concerned with the supernatural and become part of the ongoing debate about the existence of a spiritual realm beyond the empirically observable world.

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See Also Belief, Folk; Legend.

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Bluegrass: Homegrown Music

A style of harmonic country music that comes from the southern United States usually played on fiddle, guitar, mandolin, and banjo. Fiddles and banjos, high-speed instrumental duels, three- and four-part harmonies rendered a cappella that send shivers up your spine—American music that can quicken your pulse or melt your heart with emotion. More pervasive and present in our everyday lives than it has ever been, bluegrass is all around us. From children’s cartoons to car commercials, on the small screen and the big screen, bluegrass has been a colorful thread in American music since its infancy in the 1930s.

What is this homegrown music that has captured worldwide attention, this word *bluegrass* that newscasters are no longer avoiding and that television programs and movies are working into scripts? Is it new? Is it old? Where did it come from, has it been around long, and why do we seem to be hearing so much of it lately?

Academic or textbook definitions provided by folklorists and historians tend to agree in concept. Bluegrass is considered an outgrowth of early country, grounded in string band music, and derived from Southern rural—both white and black—folk traditions. Its principal identifying features lie in its vocals, all-acoustic instrumentation,¹ and instrumental virtuosity. Repertoire plays a large role in its characteristics; it also has changed the face of bluegrass.

Although often referred to as “folk” music, historically, bluegrass does not qualify, primarily because it is a modern-day form whose genesis can be pinpointed. Looking at a simplified meaning, as viewed in academia, bluegrass does not meet the criteria of folk music in that it is not “anonymously composed music usually learned through oral tradition” nor has it remained within a specific geographic community or ethnic population. Furthermore, bluegrass was pursued by its originator, Bill Monroe, as a means of earning a living, again, outside the realm of purist folk definition, where folk music is customarily performed by “nonprofessionals.” And while Monroe, who is referred to as the “Father of Bluegrass,” learned his craft by ear, these days players regularly, although not exclusively, learn by instruction. In academic parameters, folk artists typically have no formal training.

It can be argued that bluegrass exhibits signs of a new folk style. Legendary folklorist Alan Lomax, in a colorfully descriptive and much-referenced piece he wrote for *Esquire* in 1959, likened the bluegrass sound to “folk music in overdrive.” He described and compared various features of bluegrass with jazz, and went on to give a concise historical perspective of its roots. Bringing the word *bluegrass* into mainstream view, this article was considered a turning point for recognition of the music by a wider, general, and, presumably, more sophisticated audience.

Bluegrass is, in fact, largely passed along via oral tradition—but also through modern aural means, that is recordings, audio-visual material, and, now, computer and satellite radio. Informal jam sessions engross the eyes and ears of



Bill Monroe, country music singer and songwriter known as the “Father of Bluegrass Music,” Nashville, Tennessee, July 16, 1984. (AP/Wide World Photos)

novice pickers who bravely join in, learning on the fly. Participatory workshops are popular elements of festivals. Eager youngsters will approach bluegrass “stars” backstage and ask to be shown a lick or two. Instructional materials from the “masters” are plentiful, ranging from books to DVDs, with gaps left in the audio to permit the learner to play along with the teacher.

Although hundreds of bluegrass artists get paid (on extremely varying financial scales) for making music, there are, to date, relatively few groups that actually make enough money to sustain themselves and their families without relying on a second or day job. Although a growing minority of bluegrass musicians actively pursue income from bluegrass on a full-time basis, the remainder are essentially “in it for the love of the music.”

This love of the music lends itself to a sense of bluegrass community. Once you are hooked on bluegrass, you are part of the family, no matter where you land to hear it—at a mountaintop festival in Colorado, in a valley outdoor concert in California wine country, or in a cozy, unadorned basement club in New York City’s Greenwich Village. So, in a broad sense, bluegrass has become folk music with its own regionally diverse traditions, handed down at pickin’ parties in peoples’ living rooms, local community centers, festival parking lots, and via video and computer screens in homes across the United States—and around the globe.

The Bluegrass Recipe

In the traditionally accepted usage of the designation, bluegrass exhibits prominent lead tenor vocals, which often jump registers to reach sometimes ear-piercing falsetto. Such vocals, particularly imbued with a bluesy bent, are typically referred to as the *high lonesome sound*, a term that, over time, has become synonymous with bluegrass. Close harmony singing, in duet, trio, or quartet, is another prominent aspect. It is most evident in its bare form when observed in bluegrass gospel singing, often with spare or no backup instrumentation, that is, a cappella.

Five acoustic stringed instruments compose the core of the typical bluegrass band—mandolin, guitar, fiddle, five-string banjo, and upright bass. A sixth, the dobro, has come into popularity over the last quarter century as either a replacement for the fiddle or in addition to it. It is important to note that electric bass can often be found in contemporary bluegrass. Furthermore, not every bluegrass group has the identical instrument makeup or number of individuals. Twin fiddles, for example, are often popular. There are duos (e.g., Eddie and Martha Adcock, Jim Hurst and Missy Raines) and configurations of up to six to ten musicians, such as Ricky Skaggs and Kentucky Thunder or the Lewis Family. Most often, bands include four to six members. Many musicians are multi-instrumentalists and switch instruments from song to song.

While often there is an obvious “leader” in a band (e.g., the Del McCoury Band or Alison Krauss + Union Station), every member is critical to the overall

sound. This becomes quickly apparent as a song unfolds, when most, if not all, instrumentalists take a “break” between verses or chorus, playing several measures of a tune solo and then giving way for the next musician to step up to the mic. The bottom line is interaction, and a successful bluegrass group demonstrates great teamwork.

Musicianship in bluegrass is not just the ability to take a break. Technical proficiency, precision, along with lightning-quick speed, such as in breakdowns (e.g., “Foggy Mountain Breakdown,” also known as the theme from *Bonnie and Clyde*), are of prime importance. The degree of excellence required of bluegrass musicians is equal to that found in classical music or jazz, for example. How fast the musicians execute a tune becomes something of a competition within a band. The lead instrument on a particular number speeds up and steps ahead of the others momentarily, egging the others on to the finish line. This subtle acceleration is nearly imperceptible to the listener but almost certainly a crowd pleaser when it ends to rousing applause.

Speaking of jazz, bluegrass and jazz have a number of things in common. The genres are considered uniquely “American” music forms, created in the United States, albeit both derive from other traditions. The second commonality is that both bluegrass and jazz are improvisational. The previously mentioned instrumental breaks allow musicians the opportunity to show off their licks and let their individuality and creativity flow. Such improvisation can lay groundwork for instrumental challenges, such as those in the familiar “Dueling Banjos.” Furthermore, improvisation is the mother of invention; contemporary bluegrass has taken many twists and turns, in part due to such explorations.

Suffice it to say for the moment that improvisation has expanded the definition of bluegrass over the years. Even early on, there were variations within the most traditional artist circles, in spite of Bill Monroe being recognized as the music’s patriarch. Others were carrying essentially the same music to audiences but in subtly different styles. Brothers Carter and Ralph Stanley can be pointed to for their contribution of a less polished, more raw-edged presentation of bluegrass, or “mountain music,” as Ralph Stanley describes it.

Another element that carries through to today is stage dress. Albeit not part of the “sound” of bluegrass, it is considered an aspect of the persona of traditional bluegrass. Approaching his pursuit of music as a professional means, that is, a business venture, Bill Monroe dressed the part. His was not a hillbilly or cowboy band; therefore, farm clothes and cowboy outfits from head to toe were not appropriate. After a number of years touring, Monroe and his supporting musicians settled on tasteful business suits topped off with Western hats, which has become an enduring, sophisticated image still followed by many traditional bluegrass bands. Other contemporary groups, at the very least, go with the “casual

business” look, while what appears to be a minority of regularly touring bands dress to fit individualized tastes.

Adding Spice: Bluegrass Controversy

As bluegrass emerged from infancy and groups began to establish their own identities and “sounds,” one particular change opened the door to questions and controversy, an issue that persists today. As might well be imagined, toting around an upright bass fiddle in a band can be cumbersome and inconvenient. In the pre-SUV era or even today, when flying to a performance, suffice it to say that transporting a double bass can present a challenge. Add to that younger musicians influenced by the relatively new electrified sounds of rock-and-roll, and bluegrass came head-to-head with the electric bass and, thus, the “what is bluegrass?” controversy began and never ended. It was further fueled when popular songs began to make their way into the repertoire, offering still another twist to this new “old” sound.

To a bluegrass newcomer, living in a world where music choices are as varied as cable channels, this might sound absurd, but to die-hard traditionalists it is serious business, likened to tampering with Mother Nature. But, then, bluegrass is not as simplistic as what is described in the preceding paragraphs with its varied offshoots and altered states, some of which have evolved into what could be called subgenres of bluegrass; others are extensions of the music, forays into wholly other genres but performed primarily on instruments typically used in bluegrass. Repertoire, alluded to earlier, is an aspect that has grown tremendously over time. While the bluegrass catalog has not remained static, certainly scores, if not hundreds, of songs remain “standard” bluegrass fare.

What is more relevant is that controversy over whether a genre meets its proscribed criteria is not new. Jazz has many schools, from Gershwin to Django Reinhardt to Dixieland to Coltrane. The blues travel in both unplugged as well as electric circles, from the Mississippi Delta to the Piedmont region of the eastern United States to Chicago and Memphis. Renaissance and Baroque preceded classical music, which has experienced over the centuries such movements as impressionism, expressionism, and serialism.

Rock-and-roll includes Bill Haley and the Comets, Sam Cooke, the Beatles, the Bee Gees, Sting, Aerosmith, Springsteen, Madonna, and the White Stripes. They don’t all sound alike, but they all rock.

Elvis Presley, the “King of Rock-and-Roll,” turned the music world upside down when he introduced a unique blend of country, gospel, blues—and bluegrass. In July 1954, he recorded and released “That’s All Right,” backed by Bill Monroe’s “Blue Moon of Kentucky,” a beautiful, slow waltz rendered by Presley in an up-tempo, frenzied style, far different from the original creation. But, rather than controversy, the songs launched Presley’s career and a new spin on music.

Monroe understood that music was not just creativity, it was a business. He shrewdly embraced Presley's rendition and returned to the studio to rerecord it himself, adopting a split style to his own song, utilizing his slow waltz tempo in the first half of the number and breaking into a lively gallop to conclude. In doing so, he seized the opportunity to expand the bluegrass audience, in effect, by "modernizing" his own material.

Bluegrass is music with a message, whether contained in lyrics or in a searing banjo tune or a soulful fiddle lament. It is from the heart and always compelling. Bluegrass was built on many sounds and styles. Its influences were, and continue to be, diverse and sometimes diluted, yet there is always something distinctive about it. It is an American music that, when examined more closely, reflects this country's landscape.

Bill Monroe was an innovator who interpreted and expanded on other preexisting forms of music, honing his new work of art into an American genre. To paraphrase what legendary guitarist Doc Watson is fond of saying, if it is good music, why categorize it? Yes, there are basic elements to bluegrass, but as you continue your journey of discovery, definitive and restrictive labels will peel away.

Stephanie P. Ledgin

See Also Appalachian Folklore.

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Borderlands Folklore

The vernacular cultural knowledge and practices (*lore*) of the people (*folk*) who inhabit or hail from the binational swath of land encompassing the U.S.-Mexico border region.

This zone of approximately sixty miles radiating north and south from the "line" is variously described as a buffer zone, third country, open wound, edge, rim, margin, and a number of other evocative metaphors that point to the in-between character of cultural processes rooted in various degrees of transculturation.

Derived from European roots, in its most widely used forms, the word *folklore* and the more recent interchangeable term *folklife* refer to: (1) groups loosely or formally organized around ethnicity, occupation, religion, or various other kinds

of affinities; (2) communicative practices meant to be shared informally that provide instruction on “the way we do things here”; and (3) predominantly artistic practices that are not necessarily beautiful or sublime, but rather refer to a range of inventive ways to embellish what is otherwise commonplace in everyday life.

The inventory of folk practices in the borderlands is extensive. It moves along a spectrum that encompasses ancient and contemporary indigenous traditions (for example, the harvesting of the saguaro cactus fruit by the Tohono O’odham people in Arizona); Spanish cultural imports (*Matachine* dances, Santos wood carvings); traces of European, African, and Asian cultural materials; distinct national Mexican cultural elements; U.S. popular and mass culture (expressed, for example, in the preference for rock-and-roll oldies in many border radio stations); and the border area’s own hybrid creations. Such creations include unique words such as *pachuco* and *agringado*; vernacular foods such as *cabrito* and *tortillas de harina*; musical traditions such as *conjunto* and, more recently, *quebradita*; objects such as cowboy boots, hats, and *veladoras*; and lifestyles such as the afternoon conversations known as *resolanas* or the family horse-dancing tradition known as *escaramuza*.

In addition, border folklore encompasses practices distributed across patterns of regional social stratification—from working-class cultural experiences to aesthetic preferences of a *clase acomodada*, rural and urban lifeways, English and Spanish monolingual and bilingual speech communities, natives and settlers, *Americanos*, and law enforcement agents. While cultural fusion is inherent in interactions among these various sectors, conflict is also pervasive, leading to the proliferation in the region, as folklorist Olivia Cadaval has noted, of the use of many “unneighborly names between neighbors” (among which *gringo*, *wetback*, and even the more recent *alien* are but a small sample).

Border folklore is predominantly Mexican American, but this generalized characterization is heavily inflected by regional variations that represent distinct subcultural clusters, including Lower Rio Grande culture (*Tejano* culture originating from Laredo down to the Gulf of Mexico), West Texan and Chihuahuan distinctiveness (with El Paso de El Norte and Ciudad Juárez functioning as pivotal symbolic contact zones), New Mexican Hispano and Pueblo traditions, Arizona-Sonora lifeways (with marked cattle ranching folklife elements detected as far as Sinaloa and Durango and expressed in a preference for beef and cheese products), and Baja and Alta California’s Pacific-oriented cultural traits (from Baja’s popular fish tacos to Tijuana’s famed Chinese takeouts).

Broadly conceived notions of *fronterizo* identity are often trumped by regionalism, resulting in distinct and novel expressive forms such as the frequent use of the idiom *y’all* by Tejanos and the invention of words like *cimarronas* to refer to snow cones in Arizona-Sonora. Although the predominance of transborder cultural contacts is undisputable, historian Oscar Martínez has observed that not all “borderlanders” feel compelled to the same degree (by sheer economic necessity

or taste) to establish ties or absorb cultural influences from their neighbors. Some borderlanders, he has written, actually go to great lengths to avoid contact with those on the other side of the border. Nonetheless, given the pockets of xenophobia one can find even in areas along the border resolutely embedded in bicultural worlds, the general ethos of the region is one of mythical opportunities for reinvention, adaptation, and convergence. While Mexican-derived and *Mexicano* working-class folklore is most strongly represented along the region, one can easily detect the vitality of other folk traditions, such as old-time fiddling, whittling, and peach carving connected to the westward migration of workers from Appalachia and Arkansas and the African American southern postbellum diaspora.

In popular usage, the term *folklore* is sometimes used as a code for quaint, eccentric, or peculiar. In the borderlands, this connotation is usually attached to the stereotypical ideas about border towns and their reputation for unruly behavior, excess entertainment, and the saturation of material goods known as *curios* (for example, velvet paintings, plaster statuary, and garish souvenirs). As a totality, these multiple cultural nodes and flows are seldom separated into neat rubrics that distinguish folkloristic-type cultural forms from broader notions of something simply called border culture. Insofar as the borderlands function as crucible (intense laboratories for dynamics of borrowing and rejecting), the region has also incubated important resistance movements. This is true not only of folk heroes such as Gregorio Cortez or Juan García, or the widely influential “sanctuary movement” on behalf of migrants and refugees that emerged in Arizona in the 1980s, but as Baja California scholar Jose Manuel Valenzuela Arce has noted, also of more recent massive phenomena such as *choloismo* (a youth subculture that borrows styles and social ideologies from Chicano barrios in many U.S. cities). Hence, the folklore of the border is also inscribed by a residual body of legends, jokes, stories, styles, and attitudes concerning bohemians and maverick passers-by, day-trippers, writers, and artists seeking to escape civilization, as well as the hippies, ecologists, humanitarian activists, outlaws, rebels, and the transgressive characters that the late and notable border scholar Américo Paredes called *tequileros* and *sediciosos*. A widespread body of folk practices has come to be associated with drug smugglers; these include the controversial *narco corridos* and the recent rise in devotion to the *Santa Muerte*.

Paredes, a former professor of English at University of Texas in Austin, was the single-most prolific recorder and analyst of borderlands folklore. His scholarship, primarily focused on the border folk ballad known as *corrido*, but extensive to many other genres embedded in working-class Lower Rio Grande Mexican American cultural life, set a precedent that inspired dozens of scholars. Today, a robust body of scholarship is available, not only on borderlands vernacular practices specifically but also on Chicano arts and culture, that owes a substantial intellectual debt to Paredes’s work. Within this academic corpus, women scholars have stepped in to bring attention to the feminist dimensions of border expressive

life—from the historical role of gardens in the transition from Mexican to U.S. rule, to patriarchal ideologies inscribed in children’s songs, to life-cycle rituals such as *Quinceañeras*, and the musical legacy of female icons such as Lydia Mendoza and Selena. Alive as well is a sturdy tradition of avocational folklorists and community scholars—school teachers, librarians, amateur photographers, family members, social workers, health educators, and others who have set out to record and document local traditions. Several university libraries have archives containing many useful folklore materials—University of Texas Austin, University of Arizona, and Utah State are among the most comprehensive. The Folklife Center in the Library of Congress also boasts an extensive collection. Occasionally, borderlands folklore materials will appear bound up with folklore of the U.S. West or, in the case of states like New Mexico, Chihuahua, Arizona, and Sonora, in specific references to the Native groups in each area (Raramuri, Apache, Yoeme, and so on). Borderland cultural ways have been affected by increasingly porous social and economic dynamics of globalization, thus research on Mexican American communities in U.S. cities like Chicago, New York, or Los Angeles frequently leads to various forms of vernacular border practices transmigrated to urban *barrios*.

One common approach to the study of folklore is to group expressive forms into three major categories: verbal, material, and customary. The study of borderlands folklore could be pursued accordingly. In terms of material culture, some topics of interest include various forms of folk architecture, such as adobe bricks and *ramadas*; decorative arts such as paper flowers, *bordados*, *piñatas*, ironwork, blown glass, and leatherwork such as saddles and boots; religious folk art such as roadside altars or *capillas*, *nichos*, grave markers, and home altars; visual culture and public art such as low riders, murals, yard art, and signage; and the many and rich traditions associated with vernacular foods. Among this cuisine the whole phenomenon denominated Tex-Mex is worth considering, as are unique varieties of produce and vegetables (*chiltepin* chiles in Arizona, *verdolagas* in New Mexico, *fajitas* in Texas), the prevalence of *panaderias* and *carnicerias* throughout border towns, delicacies such as the Lent dessert *capirotada* and *tripitas de leche* among meat lovers; unique stories associated with food origins (the “invention” of the *quesadilla* in Imuris, Sonora, or the *margarita* in various competing border locations).

Verbal art forms include various forms of folk narratives, among which jokes, *casos*, legends, and tales are most common (*La Llorona*, *El Cucui*, *La Corua*, the Devil appearing disguised at various festive settings, and more recently, the *Chupacabras*); various forms of folk speech, among which the underground dialect known as *calo* is most prominent, together with *arbur* (double-entendre joking), naming practices (diminutives, terms of endearment, and derisions), proverbs, *dichos*, riddles, and *declamacion* of folk poetry; music in all its forms, from religious *alabanzas* to dance-oriented varieties such as *Waila* and *boleros*, and the

remarkable growth of Mariachi in the border region since the 1950s. The realm of customary practices incorporates a wide range of well-known folk expressions: *Fiestas Patrias*, Day of the Dead, *charreadas*, and horse races are among the best-documented ones, but children's games, backyard *barbacoas*, and rite-of-passage events such as weddings, baptisms, and funerals are also quite prominent; customs associated with specific occupations, such as that of miners, gardeners, and ranch hands, offer interesting insights into historical developments of the border region. Recent years have also seen a rise in interest in folk medicine, including herbal remedies, *curanderas*, *parteras*, and a number of folk beliefs associated with health and well-being, including devotions directed to noncanonical folk saints such as Don Pedrito Jaramillo, El Niño Fidencio, Teresita Urrea-La Santa de Cabora, and Pancho Villa.

Maribel Alvarez

See Also Latino Folklore.

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Broadside Ballad

In its more general sense, a narrative song (ballad) printed on one side of a single sheet of paper (broadside) and sold by a mobile peddler of the marketplace, fair-ground, and street corner sort.

The broadside phenomenon emerged in Europe in the early years of the sixteenth century, flourished in major Old World and, later, American cities and towns up to the middle of the nineteenth century, and continued in less progressive locales (Ireland, for instance) into the early years of the twentieth century; it may be found in towns and villages of some developing nations, such as Brazil and India, even today. In lay speech, the phrase *broadside ballad* (or more commonly, just *ballad* or *balet*) was not restricted to narrative songs but applied to any street-hawked printed songs at all; for the past two hundred years or so, however, folklorists have reserved the word *ballad* for a song that recounts a plotted story.

Each year from the early sixteenth century onward, many such newly made song-stories appeared for the first time on broadsides and were peddled in public places. Some were fictional, but most chronicled imaginatively some current, newsworthy event, such as a military victory, a sensational crime, or a society scandal. Few of them, however, changed their original status as popular literature to become folklore; that is to say, like their many nonliterary broadside kin—proclamations, pamphlets, tracts—they were bought, read, or sung a few times and then forgotten. They did not, as we say, “enter folk tradition,” becoming imprinted in memory and re-created in diverse day-to-day social encounters, sung by mothers to children by evening candlelight, by upstairs maids to each other after a lengthy day’s domestic service, or by a soldier to his comrades over a campfire far from home. But over time, the public showed a distinct preference for hearing, for singing, for remembering, and for experiencing again and again ballads from broadsides that exhibited a fairly distinctive set of traits. So in British folksong tradition, to take just one European example, the public had developed a preference for a certain “style” of such ballads by the latter half of the eighteenth century, and it is this style that folklorists have in mind when they talk about the broadside ballad in a *specific* sense: They do not mean just any song printed on broadside, and they do not mean—in the general sense mentioned earlier—just any narrative song printed on broadside. (Of those, we just say that they “appeared on broadside” or some such thing, as we do, for example, of the many lengthy, virtually unsingable song-tales printed in the older, heavy, ornate Gothic or black letter typeface common in Tudor and Stuart England that never became folklore.) What folklorists do mean in a *specific* sense is a folksong exhibiting a certain set of formal conventions, the development and popularization of which was closely bound up with broadside printing and dissemination. Indeed, in folklore terminology, a broadside ballad may never actually have appeared on a broadside at all—it only needs to exhibit the relevant stylistic traits of the genre!

In the tradition we know by far the most about, that of the British Isles and its North American continuation, these characteristics are best described in terms of their differences from the other major ballad style originating in Europe, the older medieval or “Child” ballad style. Thus, a broadside ballad, first of all, usually tells its story in a more linear, expository way than does the medieval ballad, which is more allusive, dramatic (with much direct, unasccribed speech that retards the forward movement of the narrative), internally repetitive, and tableauxed in style. Consider, for example, the step-by-step account in “The Flying Cloud,” a nineteenth-century broadside ballad of slavery and piracy:

And when I struck Belfrazer shore I met with Captain Moore,
The commander of the Flying Cloud belonging to Baltimore.
He cordially invited me a slavery voyage to go

To the burning shores of Affaric, where the sugar cane does grow.
 The Flying Cloud was a clipper ship, four hundred tons or more.
 She could easily sail round any ship that sailed from Baltimore.
 Her sails were as white as the driven snow and on them not one speck;
 She had thirty-two brass guns, my boys, she carried upon her deck.
 And in a short time after we had struck the African shore
 Eighteen hundred of those poor souls on board with us we bore.
 We made them walk out on our planks as we stored them down below;
 Scarce eighteen inches to the man was all that she would go.
 The very next day we set to sea with our cargo of slaves.
 It would have been better for them poor souls had they been in their graves.
 For the plagued fever came on board and swept one half away;
 We drew their bodies up on deck and hove them in the sea.
 And in a short time after we struck the Cuban shores.
 We sold them to the planters there to be slaves for ever more,
 To hoe in the rice and coffee fields beneath the burning sun,
 To worry out a wretched life till their career was done.

As this excerpt from “The Flying Cloud” suggests, a second, related feature of the broadside ballad style is its relative concreteness and specificity—people, places, dates, professions, and motives are all detailed. The broadside ballad universe is quite distinguishable from the adumbrated, stylized, and more homogeneous medieval ballad world—and even more so, for that matter, from the extremely generalized world of another folksong type, the non-narrative lyric song: Each story tends to be particularized, situated, and contextualized. To put this trait another way, a broadside ballad contains far more information of the quantifiable sort than does its medieval forebear, as the first two stanzas of “The Greenland Whale Fishery” illustrate:

It was in the year eighteen hundred and one, On March the twentieth day,
 Our sheets were spread, and our anchors weighed, And for Greenland we
 bore away, brave boys,
 And for Greenland we bore away.
 “Speed” it was our Captain’s name,
 And our ship the “Lion” bold,
 And we sailed away to that cold countrie,
 For to face the storms and the cold, brave boys, For to face the storms and
 the cold.

A third distinguishing feature of the broadside ballad, in contrast with the oft-noted impersonality and objectivity of the narrator point of view prominent in

the medieval ballad, is that it strives for subjectivity. Songs often pass explicit moral judgment on the events at hand or express overt sentimentality. They expose clearly their characters' attitudes and values, often going so far as to instruct the listener how to react emotionally or ethically to the events recounted. More often than not, this subjectivity is emphasized with the device, rare in the older ballad format, of a first-person narrator, as in "The Sheffield Apprentice":

My friends, who stand around me my wretched fate to see, Oh, don't
mourn for my downfall, but oh! do pity me.
A long while I've proved innocent, still death had sentenced me. Oh, fare-
well, pretty Polly! I'll die a-loving thee.

A fourth characteristic is that broadside ballads treat their subjects more realistically than do medieval ballads. In the newer ballad style, for example, supernatural personnel are rare; we find few revenants (ghosts who return from the dead to bid their sweethearts a final farewell), household spirits, and magical plants that, embodying the souls of dead lovers, sprout and entwine above the deceased's graves. Similarly, broadside ballad language itself is less exaggerated, stylized, and formulaic, paralleling more closely the everyday standard language; few broadside ballad horses in folk tradition are shod in gold and silver, fewer heroines dressed in red while their accompanying retainers are clad in green, fewer trips away from home are described in the same way ("He hadn't been in fair England / A week but barely three"). Of course, like all folklore, broadside ballads are imaginative art and do exhibit stock epithets ("Come all you gallant Christians, I pray you lend an ear"), but the broadside style of telling a story seems far more bound by empirical constraints than the medieval style; thus, broadside representations and language are more prone to reflect the world as experienced in everyday life.

Finally, a closely related trait should be noted: the distinctive world portrayed in the broadside ballad. In the medieval ballad, social organization, material culture, and customs and habits are distinctly premodern: Many heroines have page-boys at their command, live in castles, or can escape a parentally arranged marriage only by dying. In contrast, broadside ballads depict a more familiar, more recognizable world. Perhaps the clearest example of this sort of difference can be seen in the *dramatis personae* themselves. Even in twentieth-century versions, protagonists of medieval ballads are usually leisure-class men and women, often nobility and sometimes even royalty. Protagonists of broadside ballads, however, are much more commonly working people—laboring men and women, artisans, merchants, and formally trained professionals such as physicians and sea captains. And in this more modern world, heroines and heroes enjoy more

options in all aspects of life than do their medieval forebears, most notably in the folksong's favored topic, love relationships:

It's of a rich merchant, I can't call his name,
He had but one daughter and a daughter of fame, She courted a great
many but slighted them all, For the sake of a sailor both handsome and
tall.

This ballad tells of a father who disapproves of his daughter's choice of mate and has the sailor pressed to sea, but the daughter, disguised in male clothing, follows her lover and shares his nautical life. The two eventually return home to marry.

The five traits mentioned in the preceding passages constitute the primary textual markers of the broadside ballad as a folksong type. Other tendencies may be found in the genre that have less to do with the broadside ballad's literariness and more with its poetics—for example, an affection for 7/7/7/7 meter and for *abba* tunes, especially in the Irish-influenced strand of English-speaking tradition—but those qualities are not pervasive enough for definitional purposes. All five primary traits (most notably, the last two) are doubtless a function of the historical conditions attending the broadside ballad's more contemporary era (in Britain, the medieval ballad style had virtually ceased to be employed as a vehicle for new songs by 1700). The five traits also reflect the broadside ballad's greater dependence on print, as opposed to orality, for its origin, transmission, and reproduction.

In England by the mid-eighteenth century and in North America somewhat later, this broadside song-story style had achieved clear prominence in the folk aesthetic. Printers and the song makers they employed or contracted with turned out a much more varied set of items for sale on street corners and market stalls, but the public accepted into its personal performance repertoire of songs for everyday social use mainly ballads that manifested the characteristics described. Even amateur village rhymesters who were moved to share with family, workmates, and friends songs on topics of strictly local interest that might never see a printed page—the drowning of some neighbor's son in a nearby stream, a Maine woods logging accident—were as likely as not to follow the broadside model, as in this twentieth-century example:

Come all you Newfoundlanders and listen to my song,
I'll tell you 'bout the moose we killed and the man that did us wrong,
On a sunny morn, October third, I'm telling you no lies, When Izzie Wal-
ters hollered out saying, "Get your guns, my b'ys!"
"There is a moose down in the reach, he's coming up the lane,
Jim Keeping's got him rounded up, I think he must be tame."

La Calavera del Cólera Morbo.



La terrible calavera | **Esa le dice á cualquiera**
Del Cólera, está en combate; | **Tres piedras y un tepetate!**

Mucho tacto, valedores,
 Cuidado con la pintura . . .
 Que esta muerte á los mejores
 Los manda á la sepultura.
 Ahí les van por de contado
 Los casos, listas enteras,
 De todos los que han quedado:
 Del cólera calaveras.

Boticarios y doctores,
 En contrato criminoso,
 Hacen negocios mejores
 Con don Eusebio Gayosso.
 Pero ya todos murieron,
 Practicantes y enfermeras,
 Ya toditos se volvieron:
 Del cólera calaveras.

Toda la gente de Curia
 Que al Código y á las leyes
 Evoacaron con gran furia;
 Los abogados, los jueces
 Licenciados, tinterillos
 Pasantes y otros troneras,
 Ya toditos son por pillos:
 Del cólera calaveras.

Se trata de los banqueros,
 No de la colonia aquella,
 Ni de aquellos aparceros
 Que duermen en la alameda...
 Los de los grandes negocios
 Se vieron en grandes quiebras
 Y ahora son todos los socios
 Del cólera calaveras.

Celestino el "violinista"
 Ismael el «Polavieja»
 Y Arturo, disque el «versista»
 Que también empleados fueron
 Por tener empleo y oficio
 Y andar en bailes y fiestas,
 Serán hasta el día del juicio:
 Del cólera calaveras.

Muchos que van anda y anda
 Se viven buscando chamba,
 Dizque «al trabajo, buscarlo»
 ¡Rogando á Dios no encontrarlo!
 Son mecánicos «paileros»
 Y artesanos de «deveras»
 Y á lo mejor solo fueron:
 Del cólera calaveras.

Vengan reglas y pinceles,
 Brocha, brochita y brocheta;
 Pronto, tintas y papeles,
 El color y la paleta . . .
 Pasa el Centenario pronto
 Y el pato sudá á chorreras;
 ¡Pobres,! serán por lo tanto:
 Del cólera calaveras.



Los formales carpinteros,
 Harán su propio ataúd,
 Con los mejores «maderos»
 Que tengan . . . y á su salud
 Tomaré un «madera» seco,
 El mejor de las «maderas»;
 Y, que no las «vuelva el . tiempo»
 Del cólera calaveras.

Carlitos era cajista
 De el Tiempo, (tiempo pasado)
 Era socio antiaholista
 Y archipantapatontado . . .
 La gramática lo hundió
 Con sus exigencias fieras
 Y á él y socios los volvió:
 Del cólera calaveras.

Los que hayá en Santo Domingo
 Escriben «requetebién»,
 Y á veces los ciza el pingó
 Y ponen Cajón con G . . .
 Tanta tinta se gastó
 Con los lindas garbanceras
 Que á todos ellos volvió:
 Del cólera calaveras.



Los valientes zapateros
 Que cargan siempre chaveta,
 Y manejan buenos cueros
 Tuvieron muerte violenta
 Quisieron meter el chisel o
 Con todas las zapateras
 Y se volvieron de pronto:
 Del cólera calaveras.

Hay unos que son muy buenos
 Porque no trabajan mal;
 Sacan doce, cuando menos,
 Ni está lleno Cat-dral . . .
 Hacen bastantes perjuicios
 Con sus uñas tan certeras . . .
 son por tener ese oficio:
 Del cólera calaveras.

Los chorreados albañiles,
 Siempre bañados en cal,
 Todos fueron como jules
 Al panteón en un huacal . . .
 Por troves y parranderas,
 Tapan mal los ahujeros,
 Volviéndose por troneras:
 Del cólera calaveras.

Carniceros, cantineros,
 Panaderos, tortilleros,
 Aguadores y pulqueros
 Ya todos son calaveras . . .
 El autor y sus lectores,
 Sus lectoras zandungueros,
 Todos son puros montones:
 Del cólera calaveras.

Imprenta de Antonio Vanegas Arroyo. 2a. de Santa Teresa número 43. — México. — 1910.

A. E.

Broadside shows a man with the body of a snake in the center of a group of skulls, representing the disease cholera. The image is accompanied by a sarcastic and ironic ballad describing how cholera has afflicted the various social classes of Mexican society. Death kills everyone, regardless of their place in society. (Library of Congress)

Our guns and ammunition we got without delay, Lou Lemmon had the
 first shot I'm very sure to say.
 George Croucher had the second shot if you want to know his name,
 Bill Munden had the third shot which brought him to his end.
 There were men, women, and children all gathered round the hill
 All looking for a piece of meat their appetite to fill.

Just as the populace preferred a certain way of telling a story in song when accepting popular culture into folk tradition, so too did it prefer certain topics. Ballads of armed conflict, by land and sea; of crime and outlaws; of tragedies and disasters (earthquakes, train wrecks, coal-mining cave-ins); of occupational experience (in Britain, especially of agricultural work and seafaring and in North America, of lumbering and cowboying); of sports and pastimes (horse races, fox-hunting); and, of course, of the most popular topic by far (and the one most often made up rather than based on actual events), love relationships, with recurring plot-types about female warriors, returned and unrecognized lovers, murdered sweethearts, and so on. Over the years, these were the broadside songs that people preferred to learn, to pass on, and to remember. We base this assertion not on the numbers and kinds of actual broadsides preserved in museums, archives, and libraries or on printers' inventory and sales figures but on just what songs folklore collectors have found prominent in the repertoires of ordinary men and women over the last century or so.

The broadside ballad declined in popularity after the midpoint of the nineteenth century, with the greater availability and affordability of professional entertainment and the general decline of singing as a custom in everyday life. Concomitantly, the broadside style of song became overshadowed by the more sophisticated ditties that were heard in music halls and traveling shows, played on radios and phonographs, and transcribed in sheet music and songbooks. Increasingly, the public preferred songs of loftier topic and finer sentiment, of more mature humor, of greater inventiveness and skill, and of more general interest. The public now favored songs that were less dependent on the apparently dated plot-types (not to mention language, meter, and even tunes favored by the broadside muse) and songs that were more closely identified with particular professional composers and performers, rather than with anonymous, itinerant versifiers or with the even more anonymous "tradition." In short, the broadside ballad style did not survive well in an era that was more technologically advanced, more market driven, more consumer oriented, and more supportive of bourgeois sensibilities.

Roger deV. Renwick

See Also Ballad; Chapbook; Folksong, Lyric; Folksong, Narrative.

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Cantometrics

A method for defining societies' singing styles and correlating them with other cultural features. Coined by Alan Lomax, *cantometrics* refers to a method devised in the 1960s by Lomax, Victor Grauer, and other participants in the Columbia University Cross-Cultural Study of Expressive Style, which identifies stylistic patterns in singing from societies throughout the world. Based on thirty-six variables grouped under seven headings, culture-specific approaches to singing receive ratings that have allowed the definition of ten performance regions. Song performance features in each region correlate with and derive from social structure.

The cantometric method emerged with the availability of a body of recorded song samples from across the globe. Significant, recurrent features of performance, based on as few as ten individual examples from a society, have become the measures for creating a cantometric profile of the society's singing style. Such a profile identifies these characteristics of singing: vocal qualities, use of ornamentation (for example, glissandos and tremolos), dynamic features, melodic features, rhythmic features, level of cohesiveness, and group organization. Subcharacteristics of each of these general traits are scaled between two poles: For example, melodic form (one of nine melodic features) ranges from complex to simple, and vocal width (one of six vocal qualities) ranges from narrow to wide.

Similar profiles among several societies produce song-style regions, which correspond roughly to culture areas in George P. Murdock's *Ethnographic Atlas*. Song-style region 1, for example, represents pockets of hunter-gatherer cultures in Africa; region 6 corresponds to the tropical gardener cultures of Oceania and central Africa, and region 8 is the Old High Culture that extends from North Africa throughout most of southern and central Asia.

Moreover, the method adds an explanatory dimension to the construction of profiles and the definition of regions. Researchers using cantometric scales hypothesize correlations between singing performance and social structure. For example, harsh vocal timbres predominate in cultures that stress the development of aggressiveness in males. Narrow vocal widths and a high degree of nasality occur in cultures with tightly controlled sexuality. Rhythmic regularity reflects the inculcation in childhood of habits of obedience and adherence to structured rules, and irregular rhythms occur in cultures with indulgent child-rearing practices.

Lomax and his colleagues, who have done similar measures on dance and other expressive though nonverbal aspects of culture, have generated the bases for defining singing styles and the ways in which to scale them. They also have produced tapes for classroom use that afford students a global sample of singing styles and enable them quickly to master ways to identify specific performances according to song-style regions. Familiarity with these tapes also instructs students in constructing cantometric profiles.

To some extent, objections to cantometrics reflect folklorists' uneasiness with broad syntheses of data. Moreover, a society's song-style profile, critics aver, may reflect the scorer's subjective judgment, though informal experimentation has shown considerable consistency among individuals using the system. A general profile also can blur important variations within the society. That Lomax tended to release information about cantometrics piecemeal over a twenty-year period also contributed to hasty, often negative appraisals of what was essentially a work in progress.

William M. Clements

See Also Choreometrics.

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Carnival

Traditional celebrations that climax on the days immediately preceding Ash Wednesday throughout the Catholic world. Precise origins of carnival are unknown and most likely indeterminable. The place of the festival in the Christian calendar suggests that apparent links to pre-Christian celebrations, such as Roman Saturnalia and Bacchanalia, are formal rather than directly historical. However, some scholars believe the Catholic Church simply adopted pre-Christian customs into its liturgy when it found they could not be eliminated. Carnival has been documented in European cities from the fourteenth century and in towns and villages in the following centuries. Elements of carnival eventually



Revelers dance to calypso music in Kingstown, St. Vincent, July 8, 2003, during Mardi Gras, one of this Caribbean island's largest carnival events. (AP/Wide World Photos)

crossed the Atlantic and Mediterranean to mix with the traditions of indigenous and former slave populations in North and South American and certain African countries, creating new forms of celebration. Common to carnival throughout its historical and geographic ranges are masking and costuming (generally restricted to the three to five days before Lent but also occurring sporadically from as early as St. Martin's Day, November 11, or Epiphany, January 6), public dramas and private ceremonies, and the stylized expression of social and political attitudes. Local social or occupational groups, known variously as guilds, schools, or cliques, often serve as festival organizers and actively prepare carnival celebrations throughout much of the year. More generally, carnival is an occasion for individuals to behave in manners that either invert or exaggerate the behavior practiced at other times of the year.

Carnival costuming ranges from the extravagant and elaborate regalia worn by performers in those groups known as samba schools in Brazil and troupes of Mardi Gras "Indians" in New Orleans to a bit of makeup or a nose mask worn by parade spectators. Costumes may draw on mundane materials, such as agricultural waste and rags, or utilize exquisite paraphernalia in their designs. In European tradition, fool and wild man figures predominate. Animals, witches, and local demons and comical figures frequently appear in Europe and elsewhere. Some costumes are ephemeral, making their only appearance during the few days before Lent in a single year; other traditions (such as those in southwest Germany or in certain Belgian towns) require that local residents preserve their costumes for use

each year. Through such repeated appearances, these durable costumes come to represent the localities where they are worn. In all of these cases, costuming and the change of identity it creates encourage alternative behavior—from growling like a bear to revealing private body parts. However, individuals do not have complete license to behave as they choose during carnival.

Carnival dramas range in complexity from an individual reading a text or singing a ballad to parades, processions, and choreographed dances and festival plays lasting a day or more. These dramas frequently reorient the distinctions made between public and private spheres. For example, readings of “scandal sheets” (poetic accounts of local escapades, such as the priest who “lost” his foul-mouthed parrot) make public knowledge that previously was passed through private gossip. Likewise, the practice of wearing underwear or nightshirts on the streets during carnival brings the private out into the open. Visits to homes by troupes of performers collecting donations for community celebrations and/or their own inebriation thrust reckless outdoor behavior into the private domain. Although these diverse displays form the centerpiece of the public carnival spectacle, smaller groups of locals hold annual balls, parties, and formal ceremonies behind closed doors.

The relative freedom of behavior afforded by the joyous carnival mood seems to encourage participants to voice their opinions about current affairs. Whether in the form of scandal sheets, street theater, or politically apropos costumes (e.g., that of a Chernobyl victim), carnival antics regularly mock local, national, and international citizens, institutions, and events, giving the playful festival atmosphere an underlying tone of seriousness. The politics of carnival also encompass struggles over the privilege to enact and shape the celebration. Historically, these struggles were played out between church and secular authorities and plebeian populations. More recently, competing ethnic groups have battled over control of the festival in urban settings, and established carnival organizers and local officials have tried to stage regulated, presentable festivals in opposition to the wilder revelry advocated by some participants.

Peter Tokofsky

See Also Charivari/Shivaree; Festival.

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Celtic Folklore and Mythology

Narrative religious and belief traditions of pre-Christian Celts, now known largely through various medieval manuscripts in which the traditions have been Christianized, historicized, or fictionalized to reflect the values and tastes of later times, in which myths no longer functioned primarily as sacred narratives.

A wide variety of traditional beliefs, as well as some ancient mythical narratives, survived in the areas of Celtic Western Europe into the medieval period. The inhabitants of these areas were basically farmers, and as one might expect, they had strong and persistent mythical ideas concerning human dependence on the weather and the land and the cyclic relationship between them. This is clear from echoes in the medieval Celtic literature and to a lesser, but not insignificant, extent in the folklore of more recent times.

Early Irish literature often identifies the father deity, the Daghdha, with the sun—his name was derived from original Celtic *dago-dévos* (the good god), the term *dévos* being cognate with other Indo-European forms meaning “sky god.” In Irish the sun was described as the “horseman” of the heavens, and emanations from the Daghdha are given appellations such as “herdsman” and “plowman.” The mother goddess was identified with the land, responsible for the birth of young animals and for the growing of corn and fruit—she was known by many secondary names, but there are indications that her principal name was Danu, derived from that of an Indo-European river goddess. This combination of father deity and mother goddess, with its rich symbolism, can be seen behind many of the mythological narratives that are found in early Irish literature and also, in a less pronounced way, in the old literature of Wales.

It is often remarked that the Celts preserved no cosmological myths, but this may be true only in an overt sense. The Celtic tendency to put night before day and the winter half of the year before the summer half must be based on the movements of the sun, which accordingly was understood to give precedence to the dead ancestors over the living community. The ancestor cult that was so strong among the ancient Celts can thus be viewed as related to the movements of the sun, which sinks in the West, where the otherworld island was situated, and which passes through the underground realm of the dead during the night.

The progression from darkness to light would appear to have been rationalized among the prehistoric Celts into a dialectical relationship between the figures *Dhuosnos* (the dark one) and *Vindos* (the bright one). This emerges in medieval Irish and Welsh narratives in hints at contests (carried out in human, fairy, or animal form) between figures named Donn and Find in Irish narratives, or kindred characters in Welsh such as Arawn and Hafgan or Gwythyr and Gwynn. The ubiquitous Find or Finn (Fion, Fionn) in Irish tradition is a derivative of *Vindos*, while Donn (from *Dhuosnos*) was in persistent Irish lore a lord of the dead whose “house” was a solitary rock off the southwest coast.

The belief that the dead passed to an otherworld island in the West was held by the ancient Celts of the Continent as well as of Britain and Ireland. This realm became known by a variety of names, such as *Tír na nóg* (the land of the young) or *Ynys Avallach* (the isle of apples), and ancient tradition that envisaged the Isle of Man in this way gave rise to lore concerning a great lord of that island, a magician called in Welsh *Manawydan* and in Irish *Manannán*. The idea of an otherworld island off the west coast survived not only in Gaelic areas but also in Welsh, Cornish, and Breton traditions of the Middle Ages. It was often elaborated into legends of a city on the coast or under a lake that had been submerged by a great catastrophe due to some human error or some rash act that brought about the anger of the elements or of God himself.

Early Irish and Welsh sources contain echoes of a mythical contest at a great rock in the western sea, an idea that must have sprung from similar archaic Celtic beliefs. This was developed—probably in the prehistoric period—by associating it with the far-flung plot of a primordial battle between two sets of deities. In its most elaborate form, in the early medieval Irish text *Cath Maige Tuired*, a great battle is described between the divine *Tuatha Dé Danann* (people of the goddess Danu) and the sinister *Fomorians* (*Fomoir*) (underspirits, who had strong aquatic connections). Such development of mythic symbolism into historical legend is typical of how the detritus of ancient myth came to be treated in medieval lore. The *Tuatha Dé Danann* are described in the text as inhabitants of Ireland with their royal center at Tara, and the *Fomorians* as sea pirates who oppress them in a variety of ways. The cast of characters includes several Celtic deities, such the *Daghdha* himself, his consort the goddess *Morrigan* (*Mor-Ríoghain*, “phantom queen”), the smith god *Goibhniu*, and the polytechnic god *Lug* (*Lugh*).

Lug wins the battle for the *Tuatha Dé Danann* by slaying the *Fomorian* leader, *Balar*, who has a terrible eye that destroys all on which it looks. This *Balar* (from Celtic *Bolerios*) dwells on the rocky island of *Tory* off the northwest coast, and perhaps of equal significance, he is also associated with *Mizen Head*, the extreme southwest point of Ireland. In fact, the extreme southwest area of Britain was anciently known as *Bolerion*, a cognate of his name. *Balar*’s connections with both the scorching and the setting sun are therefore clear, and *Lug* may represent

the sun in its more constructive role. Such a basic format was developed into a plot that had Lug as the prophesied son of Balar's daughter, a format that echoes a well-known mythic structure of the eastern Mediterranean region (such as accounts of Sargon, Cyrus, Moses, and Perseus). It seems likely that this plot had been borrowed in antiquity by the Continental Celts from the Greeks and attached to their deity Lugus, of whom Lug is the Irish development. Traces of it have also been argued for Lleu, the Welsh equivalent of the deity, who is described in the *Mabinogi* and other medieval Welsh sources. The plot was further used in medieval Irish accounts of the heroic youth of Finn mac Cumhaill, and in the Breton source that Marie de France used for her lay *Yonec*.

Other Celtic deities survived strongly in medieval lore, and in even more human forms. A noted example was the Celtic goddess *Rigantona* (exalted queen), cognate with the above-mentioned Irish Morrigan. In the *Mabinogi*, she appears in the guise of Rhiannon, an otherworld woman riding on a large white horse that outstrips all her pursuers. Morrigan was in fact the original name of the otherworld lady known as Macha in medieval Irish literature. As the goddess of Ulster kingship, she acquired the new name from that of the area that was the center of that kingdom—Macha meaning “plain” or “pasture.” Macha was described as a great runner, and her most celebrated achievement was winning a race against horses. Such a *Rigantona*-personage, paralleling the ancestor deity in equine associations, must have been the same as the Continental Celtic goddess of horses known as Epona (exalted horse lady).

Medieval Irish literature relates that Macha warned her husband not to boast of her running skills, but he does so, leading to the tragic end of their union. This exemplifies the process by which suitable narratives were borrowed to underline the importance of mythical personages. The narrative plot here concerns an otherworld woman coming to live with an ordinary man and then leaving him after he breaks a prohibition she had put on him. This seems to have been a floating folklore plot in Western Europe in the early Middle Ages, for it appears later in French legends of Melusine. The floating motif easily attached itself to the goddess of Ulster kingship, as the marriage of the king to the land goddess was an ancient conceit in Celtic inauguration rites. The maintaining of kingship was of course a precarious business, and immemorial tradition had added many types of *gessa* (magical prohibitions) to the ordinary social pressures that a king had to endure.

Lofty personages were made the subjects of floating medieval plots in other contexts also. A popular story in early medieval Ireland told of how the Daghdha was made to relinquish control of his dwelling in the prehistoric tumulus of Brugh na Bóinne (Newgrange in County Meath) to his son Aenghus. According to this, Aenghus got a loan of the dwelling “for a night and a day” and then kept it forever by claiming that all time is computed as night and day. There are several other ruses of the “tomorrow never comes” type described in Irish tradition, and

clearly the plot has been borrowed here from popular lore. Again, however, it underlines the ancient mythic idea of son superseding father or by extension the ritual idea of a king gaining tenure of his realm from the ancestor deity. The name Aenghus meant “true vigor,” and the process is again revealed in the name of a character in the Ulster cycle who also relinquishes a kingdom: Fergus mac Roig (or Ferghus mac Ro-éich, literally, “male vigor son of great horse”). The archaic basis of the ritual may further be exemplified by the pseudonym of Aenghus, Maccan Óg, which scholars regard as a development from the archaic Celtic youth deity Maponos, son of Matrona (“exalted mother” or “great mother”). Maponos appears in medieval Welsh sources as Mabon.

As in the case of narrative plots, the mythological personages themselves could gain popularity in comparatively mundane form. A clear instance is the smith god known in Irish as Goibhniu and in Welsh as Gofannon. His memory survived in a Christian context as a marvelous craftsman called Gobán Saer, and legends were told of how this Gobán built monasteries and round towers for saints throughout the length and breadth of Ireland. The images of Celtic deities, particularly Lug, have been deciphered by scholars in the cults of several early Irish saints, while the celebrated St. Brigid (Brigid) of the sixth century CE has attracted to her tradition much of the cult of her namesake, the Celtic goddess Brigid (the highest one), and accordingly was portrayed as a patroness of agriculture, of fertility, and of poetry. The cult of St. Brigid, in turn, exerted a large influence on the lore concerning other female saints, not only in Ireland but throughout much of the medieval Celtic world.

The goddess persona persisted into medieval Ireland in two ways: as a convention in the verses of poets, where goddesses were mentioned as consorts and protectresses of great kings and chieftains, and in ordinary folklore, where they were described as fairy queens ruling from palaces within several of the archaeological structures that dot the Irish countryside. One of the most famous of these ladies was Áine (the bright one), patroness of the Eoghanacht dynasty in Munster and later of the Norman family of Fitzgerald. Many folk legends tell of how she appeared from time to time to assist families in need. The patronage of the goddesses, indeed, developed through medieval tradition into one of the most celebrated of all spirits in Irish culture, the banshee (*bean sí*, meaning “woman of the tumulus,” or “fairy woman”). She is heard to lament the death of a member of the old Gaelic race, thus showing her special connection with and affection for such a person. Another retention of goddess imagery is exemplified by lore of the Cailleach Bhéarra, an old hag who was said to have lived from time immemorial and was particularly associated in Ireland with farming and harvesting and in Scotland with the wilderness and forests.

Druidic lore did not survive in direct form from ancient Celtic belief, but the learned castes preserved into the Middle Ages and to more recent times much of

Cú Chulainn. Illustration by H. R. Millar.
(Squire, Charles. *Celtic Myth & Legend*,
Poetry & Romance, 1905)



the mystical and magical functions of their druidic predecessors. It is logical to relate to this context the prophetic and clairvoyant utterances of such figures as Finn and Mongán in Ireland and Myrddin and Taliesin in Wales, as well as the legends concerning the magical powers of many historical poets (resulting in particular from their satires). Aspects of druidic lore persisted in accounts of poets getting their inspiration from otherworld sources and (in a broader narrative context) in the frequent motif in heroic and romantic stories of entry to the otherworld while sleeping or in a trance or through bidding at a tumulus. Adventures of this kind concerning Cú Chulainn and Finn in Ireland and Pwyll and Rhonabwy in Wales are the most celebrated, but such visits were a commonplace of the marvelous stories in medieval Celtic literature.

There were many accounts of pseudo-historical or historical ancient kings. The most celebrated of these was Arthur, who bore a Romanized Celtic name, and who probably was in origin a *dux Britanniarum*, a leader of native soldiers in the Britain of the fifth or sixth century CE. Such leaders, with more or less conventional Roman military skills, tried to defend Britain against the Anglo-Saxon invaders after the imperial legions left. Early sources describe him as the head of a faithful body of warriors and winning several battles, and he was also claimed to have been a great hunter. From the eleventh century onward, the new Norman overlords of Britain expropriated his memory. Lore about him and his followers

developed rapidly, and he came to be portrayed after the manner of a medieval feudal king with his Knights of the Round Table.

The most famous king in Irish medieval lore was Cormac mac Airt, whose origin is lost in remote antiquity but whose connection with the kingship of Tara was exploited by the Connachta or Uí Neill dynasty, predominant in Ireland from the fifth to the eleventh centuries CE. Legends of Cormac depicted him as a great ancient king who was cared for by a wolf bitch as a child, who came to prominence at thirty years of age, and who delivered many wise counsels and judgments. As the model and claimed founder of Uí Neill kingship, he was thus being portrayed on the lines of the great founders whose fame was becoming known through biblical and classical learning: Romulus, Christ, and Solomon. Much of the regnal and historical lore of medieval Ireland in fact came from sources connected with the Uí Neill dynasty, but it contained within it archaic ritualistic and mythical notions such as the notion that the forces of nature take an active part in the reign of a king and determine his ultimate destiny.

A wide range of migratory motifs and legends circulated within the Celtic world of the Middle Ages. Some of these may have been part of local tradition from time immemorial—such as the cauldron possessed by a deity or magical being that was always full of food and that revived any dead warriors thrown into it. One of the best-known migratory legends had a “three-cornered” plot in which a young hero meets a tragic end through falling in love with a beautiful lady betrothed to a vengeful older man. This is the plot of the tragic stories of Deirdre and Naise or Gráinne and Diarmaid in Ireland, and of Drystan and Essyllt (Tristan and Iseut) in Cornwall and Brittany. Other migratory motives that were well known in medieval Celtic lore concerned the workings of fate. Examples include the sacrifice of an innocent youth to use his blood in building a fortress, the botched attempt by a man to regain his wife from the fairy realm, the mysterious lake horse that brings great benefit to a farmer until it departs after being hit, and the prophesied death of an individual in an unlikely place or by unlikely means.

These motifs circulated orally, but others may have been spread mainly by literary borrowing. Examples of the latter include a ring being fortuitously recovered from the belly of a fish, a camp or fortress being captured by attackers who gain entry by concealing themselves in baskets or bags, the supernatural lapse of hundreds of years when a hero visits the otherworld, or the false accusation of an innocent young man by the wife of a powerful ruler. Motifs of this kind could be found in Greek and Latin writings, from which medieval Celtic writers borrowed them into their own works. When read out from these more homely sources, the motifs in turn passed into the oral lore of the ordinary people.

With the spread of the Roman Empire, and perhaps from an even earlier date, international tale types entered the cultural zones of the Celts. This process of plot borrowing was much accelerated in the medieval period through trade contacts

with other countries; through the travels of clerics, pilgrims, and merchants; and also through the Viking settlements in many Celtic areas. Dozens of such international plots have been identified in medieval Welsh and Irish literature, often being used in association with the names of mythical and historical characters from indigenous tradition. This was another aspect of the tendency to develop detritus of rituals and beliefs into romantic narratives, a process that modern scholars, from their different perspectives, might view as either a confusion of the earlier tradition or as a dramatic perpetuation of it.

One singular example of a very ancient folktale being embedded in early Irish tradition is the story of Mider and his love for Étaín. Both of these characters, as well as several others in the story, were mythical personages, and there are several echoes of ancient ritual and history involved. In the actual story, however, Mider loses Étaín and has to perform stupendous tasks to regain her—this and other motifs in the story possess relatives in AT 313, “The Girl as Helper in the Hero’s Flight,” one of the earliest and most far-flung international tale types known. It must have been connected with the ancient Irish traditional material sometime in the early centuries of the Common Era.

A celebrated story in the Welsh *Mabinogi* tells of a male child born to Rhiannon being stolen away by a giant. Rhiannon is accused of killing the baby. A foal is later stolen by the same giant, but the owner of the foal cuts off the giant’s hand and manages to recover both baby and foal. Rhiannon and other characters belong to ancient Celtic tradition, but the plot of the story possesses strong parallels in AT 653 (“The Four Skillful Brothers”), AT 712, and other international narrative material. In fact, a similar use of some of the same material occurs in a later medieval Irish story in which Finn mac Cumhaill recovers stolen children and puppies from a giant. Finn enlists the assistance of marvelous helpers in his task, a plot based on AT 653; and the related helper tale AT 513 (“The Helpers”) is in fact the plot base for another celebrated *Mabinogi* story, that of *Culhwch and Olwen*.

Metamorphosis was a trait often associated with the deities of early Celtic myth, perhaps originating in druidic emphasis on such mystical faculties. By the medieval period it had become commonplace among Welsh and Irish writers when describing the great worthies of old, especially those who had divine names or divine attributes. It was claimed that they could take the forms of various animals and birds and could, when necessary, live for long periods in such forms. To underline and dramatize this belief, narrators made use of episodes and motifs well known elsewhere in international traditions, such as the final episode of the folktale “The Magician and His Pupil” (AT 325), in which two magicians take on various forms as they fight each other. Such tales of transformation influenced the contest of the bulls in the Ulster cycle and the Welsh story of Taliesin. One very popular tradition, frequently used by medieval storytellers in both Wales and Ireland, concerned the great age of particular animals, whose names were celebrated

in tradition, and the task of seeking out these animals and comparing their ages. The two principal plots in question—AT 80A (“Who Gets the Beehive”) and AT 726 (“The Oldest on the Farm”)—were very old in European lore, but their combination would appear to have been a particular development in the Celtic areas.

Of the many other international narrative plots utilized in medieval Celtic folklore, we may quote one example to show how such material could be at once simple in its structure and pervasive in its influence. This is the story of the king with ass’s ears (AT 782), which was well known in classical sources (where the king is often said to be King Midas) and in other sources. A good deal of tradition centered on a king called March, reputed to have been the elderly lover of Essyllt, and thus the rival of Drystan (these three characters are commonly known as Mark, Tristan, and Iseut in the Continental literature of the Middle Ages). The name was a corruption of the Latin one, Marcus, borne by a sixth-century local ruler in southwest Britain. It could, however, be interpreted as “horse” by speakers of Celtic. It was natural, then, for the ass’s ears, transformed into horse’s ears, to be attributed to him. The story was told in Wales, Cornwall, and Brittany that he concealed his ears, but his barber grew sick from keeping the secret and whispered it to a tree or to reeds. A musical instrument was made from the tree or the reeds, and when it was played it sang out the dreadful secret! This March was famous in tradition as a seafarer (*llynghessawc*), and thus the story traveled across the Irish Sea and became told of the ancient mythical Leinster king Labhraidh, who was also known as a seafarer (*loingseach*).

Dáithí Ó hÓgáin

See Also Arthurian Lore; Folktale; King Arthur.

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Chapbook

A nineteenth-century English word coined to signify the small, ephemeral books sold, among items such as needles and thread, by itinerant peddlers called chapmen. Chapbooks also were sold in shops. By 1700, chapbooks had become an

important part of the stock of such peddlers, and their subject matter included prophecies and fortune-telling, fables and fairy tales, and stories of devils and angels, love and hate, and scoundrels and heroes.

Chapbooks, with their modern typography, replaced the earlier black letter broadside ballads; usually measuring 3.5" by 6", they also were easier to carry about than a pile of ballad sheets. By the end of the seventeenth century, they were typically printed in octavo, a sheet of paper folded three times to make eight leaves or sixteen pages, but chapbooks of four, eight, twelve, and twenty-four pages were also common. Printed on both sides of a sheet of paper, they were a better value than broadside ballads and became the main reading matter available for the poor, although they also were read by more well-to-do individuals. Chapbooks containing ballads were called "garlands."

In the nineteenth century, chapbooks were increasingly produced for children. No longer printed on coarse rag paper, they were better produced and often smaller in size. The quality of woodcuts and other illustrations was improved, and the illustrations were sometimes colored. Broadside ballads, no longer printed in black letter, replaced chapbooks for adult readers of the poorest class. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, more than 250 firms and individuals were involved in the production of chapbooks in London alone, with many more in such cities and towns as Newcastle upon Tyne, Banbury, Northampton, Gloucester, and York. Chapbooks were printed in Belfast, Dublin, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and throughout the English-reading world.

Ephemeral literature seems to exist wherever its means of production exist, and it is often late in its history before it becomes an object of study; its forms differ somewhat from country to country. *Folhetos* (pamphlets or little books)—or, colloquially, *folhetes*—are known to have been printed in Brazil since the late nineteenth century. Often 4" by 6.5" in size and of eight, sixteen, thirty-two, and occasionally sixty-four pages, these little books are much like English chapbooks. Printed on newspaper-weight paper, they contain stories in verse (with the exception of a small number of prayers in prose), thus differing from English chapbooks, which often were written in prose. In subject matter, *folhetos* reflect the culture in which they are produced. Most stories represent a series of trials, and their heroes and heroines are either saints or sinners. Almost all have explicit, serious messages, even though many are humorous and a few are pornographic. A recent title, *A contagiosa AIDS matando a humanidade* (Contagious AIDS killing humanity), reflects both a highly conservative view of sexual behavior and a plea for help for AIDS victims.

Because of the interest of middle-class visitors and their common use of the Portuguese phrase *literatura de cordel* (stories on a cord) for *folhetos*, such a little book is now commonly called a *cordel*, even though the items produced in Brazil differ from the Portuguese chapbooks to which they are related. The relationship between the little ephemeral books of Brazil and Portugal may be

thought of as analogous to the relationship between chapbooks produced in England and the United States. Products of different people in different places, they differ accordingly.

The growing awareness of the existence and importance of ephemeral literature in many countries outside of the Western European tradition—Egypt and Pakistan, for example—and the increasingly detailed study of broadsides and chapbooks within the European tradition since the 1970s have resulted in a virtual revolution in our understandings of the place of these materials in society. The woodcuts used for chapbooks and broadsides once were called “crude” and their printing “vile,” but those words are now understood to reveal more about the privileged perspectives of those who uttered them than about the materials themselves. Working with limited resources, chapbook printers produced little books, many of enduring value.

Michael J. Preston

See Also Broadside Ballad.

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Charivari/Shivaree

Ritualized forms of popular justice intended to draw public attention to transgressions of the moral or social order and thus enforce community standards, appropriate behavior, and traditional rights.

Also known as *Katzenmusik*, *Polterabend*, and *Haberfeldtreiben* in Germany; *Thierjagen* in Holland; *cencerrada* in Spain; *scampanate* in Italy; *ceffyl pren* in Wales; riding the stang, skimmington, tin panning, kettling, Devon's stag hunt, and rough music in England and Scotland; and serenade, tin panning, and bellringing in North America, these traditional events show great variation over their distribution. Elements of charivaris derive from forms of punishment and folly that are over a millennium old, and they coalesced into a coherent ritual form by the Middle Ages. With the increasing dominance of civil authority over social life, charivaris have largely disappeared; they continue today primarily in isolated rural communities or in substantially altered form and function.

Central to all forms of the charivari is clamorous noise, usually produced with pots and pans, tins, bells, horns, or other traditional local instruments. Typically, participants gather at a designated public place and noisily proceed to the home of the offender, where they mock the victim with skits (particularly dramatizations of the offense), continue their clamor, and engage in festive activities including costuming, drinking, and licentious sexual activity. The scene may be repeated for several nights, and on many occasions, the crowd eventually invades the home of the victim, levies payment of cash or alcohol in exchange for ceasing the spectacle, or forces the subject from his or her home and subjects him or her to a variety of traditional punishments.

These include riding a donkey while seated backward, riding a pole, satirizing, and even beating and death. Mockery also can have traditional local form, such as a particular style of poetic proclamation or versified satire sung to the tunes of popular songs. Historically, the most common reasons for initiating a charivari were perceived domestic problems: quick remarriage by a widow or widower, extreme discrepancy between the ages of spouses, wife or husband beating, adultery, licentious conduct by a married person, a child born out of wedlock, or even marriage to an outsider. Locals also directed charivaris against strikebreakers or unpopular officials and policies. A related North American form, whitecapping, victimizes dissidents and oppressed or marginalized groups, such as African Americans and immigrants. Best known in the form of Ku Klux Klan lynching, whitecapping does not include the clamor of charivaris, but it retains aspects of the traditional processional drama and punishment.

Some historical and by far the most common contemporary charivaris may be more aptly termed *reverse charivaris*. Rather than punishing their victims, they affirm the social belonging of the subjects by playfully celebrating their foibles

and social transitions. Thus, newlyweds may be subjected to derision or be the focus of a street serenade; baby showers and retirement parties also feature mockery of the person entering a new stage of life. Similarly, during festivals such as carnival, celebrants may draw on elements of the charivari to satirize the behavior of individuals (for example, a drunk driver running his car into a tree), but the only punishment is the publicity the “victim” receives, and typically he or she enjoys the attention. Although reverse charivaris affirm local standing, they simultaneously remind participants, as traditional charivaris do, that the community watches over behavior.

Peter Tokofsky

See Also Custom.

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Charm

Folk belief and practice in which humans use magic to bring about particular outcomes in activities where there is uncertainty. Charms can be verbal or material, they can involve action, and they seem to be cross-cultural and found in all historical periods. Charms are important in several different areas of folk belief scholarship, including folk medicine, folk religion, ritual, and custom.

One of the most common forms of behavior involving charms is the practice of keeping or carrying amulets, fetishes, or talismans—material objects thought to ward off evil forces or bring good luck. People in ancient Rome used garlic to keep witches away; in medieval times, monks used the mullen plant as a charm against devils although the plant also was thought to be used in witches’ brew; the Chinese sometimes carry peach wood or peach stones to ward off evil; and many people carry a rabbit’s foot or hang horseshoes over doors for good luck in the contemporary United States. In religious terms, carrying a saint’s medal or small statue is thought to help people avoid accidents on trips. This practice is not confined to Catholics; Protestant commercial fishermen in the Gulf of Mexico often

carry saints' medals given to them by priests at annual blessings of the fleet. Scholars must examine the ritual context in order to understand why Protestants would carry Catholic medals. As with any kind of folk belief, it is important to study charms within the specific context of belief and behavior.

Verbal charms or incantations are an important part of healing traditions among many cultural groups. For example, the practice of bloodstopping in Appalachia depends on reciting a verse from the Bible several times. The verse is learned from certain family members and is usually thought of as a secret ritual that has to be learned and practiced in very specific ways. People who believe that excessive bleeding can be stopped through this verbal charm tell stories about the times they have witnessed the charm succeed, saving the lives of individuals who would have bled to death before they reached a hospital.

Often, to be effective, use of a verbal charm also must be accompanied by certain actions. For instance, Italian fishermen have a charm for dispersing a waterspout that could sink their boats. They recite words from Scripture, make the sign of the cross with a special knife, and say "tail of the rat" to keep the magic from harming anyone. As with bloodstopping, this charm must be learned from a special person under certain conditions—in this case, from an elderly woman on Christmas Eve. Again, stories are told about experiences that validate when a person has seen this charm work to break up a waterspout. Catholic Croatian fishermen in the Adriatic have a similar charm for waterspouts, but it involves an inscription, combining material and behavioral methods: They draw a Star of David on a piece of paper and throw it overboard in the direction of the waterspout. This is another instance of using the religion of others as a source for folk belief.

Folk charms are associated with particular groups or communities, but knowledge of charms can pass to a broader, mass-media context. Traditional African American charms have been popularized through music, novels, and the public interest in conjuration. Chicago blues singer Muddy Waters sang, "Got my mojo working, but it just don't work on you." The mojo, an amulet that can be made of different materials, is a powerful love charm; hence, the singer referred to his frustration that his mojo was not working on the woman he loved. Recordings of Waters's song have been played all over the world, and other singers have done versions of it. Charms are a cross-cultural phenomena, so that even though specific amulets and incantations vary widely, the concept of using a magical means for controlling fate seems universal.

Patrick B. Mullen

See Also Magic; Medicine, Folk.

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Childbirth and Childrearing

Childbirth is the act or process of giving birth (parturition), and childrearing the acts or processes of protecting, caring for, feeding, and otherwise facilitating the development of offspring from infancy to relative self-sufficiency. For the majority of human history in both Western and non-Western societies, the practices of childbirth, midwifery, and early infant care have been shaped by societal issues and beliefs and have undergone great changes, new understandings, and different practices. Influences on childbirth and childrearing practices have included advances in medical knowledge, industrialization and urbanization, the rise of the middle class, changes in belief patterns and structures in both organized religions and in community-based household or folk religions, and new scientific and cultural understandings about women’s bodies, health, and roles.

In the nineteenth century, early folklorists and antiquarians began to collect what they regarded as survivals (relics of the past, particularly traditions and beliefs common to rural areas). Examples associated with pregnancy, childbirth, and infancy included notions about dietary intake and prenatal marking, including pica (the desire to eat non-food items, such as ice, chalk, ashes, or starch, and particularly geophagy—dirt-eating during pregnancy); divination practices regarding the sex of the fetus; practices and styles of delivery; methods of pain relief and postures; customs and rituals of birth chambers and attendants; and societal attitudes and beliefs regarding general birthlore and early infant care. These were recorded in large collections of folkways and rural practices. Fanny Bergen’s *Current Superstitions: Collected from the Oral Tradition of English Speaking States* (1996) and Charles Skinner’s *Myths and Legends of Our Own Land* (2003) are examples.

In contrast, histories of birth presented by members of the medical profession were based on cultural evolutionary ideas involving projections of progress toward social ideals; in the main, they advocated and described cultural advances and technological developments. Conventional histories, however, did not capture or discuss the experiences of the vast majority of women giving birth, the

Woman in labor assisted by a midwife.
(National Library of Medicine)



role and beliefs of the community in the birth process, or the practices, traditions, and beliefs of midwives.

More recent efforts to create a history of birth from a folklife or social historical perspective placed traditions and practices within chronological periods. Typically, early histories describe a period in the deep past when women were highly involved in delivery as midwives and assistants practicing a noninterventionist approach that was centered on serving mothers. A second period in Western Europe and in North America is seen as beginning in the mid-1700s with the growing professionalization of medicine, an increase in the study and practice of midwifery by males, and the definition of birth as a disease state. A third period, from the mid-nineteenth century until the present day, is characterized as a period of consolidation of medical control over birth, with a countermovement to reclaim birth as a female-centered, natural event, and a glorification of the early period of what is now called “social birth.”

In the first period of social birth, from the early years of America until the mid-1700s, the process of labor and delivery was a community event. Childbirth was viewed as a normal process, and community members were content to allow nature to follow its course. The predominant practices, material objects, and language

associated with birth were predicated upon this understanding and approach. Intervention was rare, and doctors were called only in the case of an impossible delivery, the death of the mother, or the death of the child in utero (as yet unborn).

Near the time of delivery, the neighborhood midwife was alerted that her services would be required in the days to come. When the moment arrived, the father, a child, or a neighbor was sent to fetch her to the pregnant woman's home to assist in the delivery. The midwife would bring along the tools of her trade—twine, scissors, cloth, and perhaps a birth stool or chair. The latter would be assembled and the expectant mother would spend her labor talking with her friends and neighbors who had gathered. When she reached the point of delivery, she would sit upon a birth chair, makeshift stool, or the lap of attendants, and deliver her child. Fathers participated if needed; doctors were seldom present.

A diary account from 1677 by Samuel Sewall of Massachusetts portrays such a visit by a midwife:

April 2, 1677. Father and I sitting in the great Hall, heard the [summoning] child cry. . . . Went home with the Midwife about 2 o'clock, carrying her Stool, whose parts were included in a Bagg. Met with the watch at Mr. Rocks Brew house, who baid us stand, enquired what we were. I told the Woman's occupation, so they baid God bless our labours, and let us pass. (Banks 1999, 6)

American midwives were high-ranking members of their communities, consulted for their advice on birth, but also on conception, pregnancy, abortion, childrearing, and all elements of community health care. In addition to their practical expertise in delivery, midwives had knowledge—passed on through oral communication and informal apprenticeships—of herbal treatments, including the use of ergot, a wheat fungus that stimulates labor (later marketed and used as a medical drug), herbs to cause the contraction of the uterus (for delivery or abortion), and aids for relaxation. In the seventeenth century, only the poorest of the poor delivered their children in hospitals, lying-in societies, or the medical area of the poorhouse. These were the only cases a doctor might have occasion to observe, although the vast majority of these deliveries were also attended by midwives. By the late nineteenth century, Dr. Charles Zeigler was complaining in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, “It is at present impossible to secure cases sufficient for the proper training in obstetrics, since 75 percent of the material otherwise available for clinical purposes is utilized providing a livelihood for midwives” (Ehrenreich 1989, 95).

In early American settlements, church authorities were involved in approving or certifying midwives, because they were required by law to baptize children, often in utero, in the event of a difficult or fatal delivery so the infant could be absolved of original sin prior to death. In addition, part of a midwife's duties, as dictated by

church authorities, included determining the identity of the father of an unmarried woman's child, and informing authorities if an abortion had been performed after a report of quickening (first movement of a fetus in utero perceived by the mother).

Despite their high status within the community, midwives also bore the burden of suspicion. Various Christian doctrines loosely supported the interpretation of illness or death as the will of God or the result of sin or association with the Devil. Midwives were therefore vulnerable to charges of witchcraft upon failure to deliver a perfect child. Suspicion was also attached to their free access to body parts long considered magical: the placenta, the umbilical cord, and the caul (the embryonic sac when it covers the head at birth). In 1555, Würzburg regulations for midwives forbid them to take away the placenta and required that they throw it in running water. As late as 1711, Brandenburg regulations forbade midwives to give away or sell remains of birth, such as the membranes, caul, or umbilical cord (Forbes 1966, 118). The first person executed in the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1648 was Margaret Jones, a midwife accused of witchcraft (Williams 1992, 152). The decline of the influence of the institutional Protestantism and Catholicism after the American War of Independence served to lessen charges of witchcraft; midwives continued to practice throughout the American colonies and states.

Colonial women bore children on an average of every two and a half years—about twelve pregnancies in a lifetime. Approximately one birth in every twenty-four resulted in stillbirth or death within the first days of life, and about seven children in each family survived infancy and early childhood. Colonial Americans generally regarded the rearing of offspring as an exercise in taming children's innate sinfulness and training them to be productive citizens. Many New England Puritans beat their children, seeking to break their willfulness, and took them to see corpses or hangings as a warning against the consequences of sin.

The vast majority of colonial and early republican American families lived on farms and depended on the labor of every family member. By the age of six or seven, farm children had specific responsibilities. Considered miniature adults, their rearing was built on received gender roles: girls were schooled in household chores, boys on the farm, in the family business, or apprenticed out to a neighboring industry. By ten or twelve, sons were working at men's tasks and daughters were helping their mothers with cooking, washing, spinning, and milking, or taking over certain areas of home and garden care completely. Boys and girls were often fostered out between the ages of seven and fourteen as servants or apprentices. Titles of conduct books by Louisa Caroline Huggins, one of the first women in the United States to write for and about children, are representative of the belief in separate gender spheres: *I Will Be a Lady: A Book for Girls* (1845) and *I Will be a Gentleman: A Book for Boys* (1846). It should be noted, however, that there was no single American way of childrearing; Native Americans, African Americans, and white colonists had different traditions.

After the Revolutionary War, the growing influence of physicians' guilds and colleges, the increase in the numbers of doctors being trained and practicing, and the discovery of possibilities for profit in midwifery threatened the practice of traditional midwifery and the livelihood of female midwives in the United States. By increasingly defining birth as a dangerous, pathological crisis, the medical profession undermined society's belief in the skills of midwives, thereby increasing doctors' incomes. In 1820, Walter Channing, professor of obstetrics at Harvard, wrote, "Women seldom forget a practitioner who has conducted them tenderly and safely through parturition. . . . It is principally on this account that the practice of midwifery becomes desirable to physicians. It is this which insures to the permanency [sic] and security of all their other business" (Banks 1999, 40).

Physicians developed and substantiated a definition of pregnancy and birth as disease states. Displacing traditional folk medicine in order to supply a specific etiology (cause) and catalogue of symptoms, they offered elaborate birth-chair designs and began to innovate invasive practices and the liberal use of technologically advanced tools. Forceps, crochets, and hooks, previously only utilized as a last resort to save the life of the mother, the child, or both, became commonplace. Changes in the folk practices of delivery and in the beliefs and attitudes that had supported them are most evident in changes in styles and postures for delivery—from upright in a birth chair to recumbent in a bed (necessary for tool use); in the sex of the birth attendant—from female to male; in attitudes toward laboring women; and in language regarding pregnancy and birth. Terms such as "teeming" and "breeding" were replaced in nineteenth-century diaries, literature, and other texts with terms like "sick," "confined," and, tellingly, "ill."

Midwifery manuals gave way to obstetrical texts, and in the titles of these works, pregnancy and birth were increasingly referred to as the "diseases of women." Advice booklets appeared that instructed women as to proper behavior during pregnancy exams and birth, and provided general guidance for the selection and use of doctors. This portrayal of birth as a disease state fed the growing conception within society of the fragility of women. As Dr. Mary Putnam Jacobi stated in 1895, "I think, finally, it is in the increased attention paid to women, and especially in their new function as lucrative patients, scarcely imagined a hundred years ago, that we find explanation for much of the ill health among women, freshly discovered today" (Banks 1999, 41).

The actual practice of childbirth was also affected by other significant societal changes, including shifts in the general attitude of the populace about femininity and womanhood, industrialization, changing economic structures, and the emergence of the middle class. Women were eventually understood to be as weak and fragile as doctors and scientists thought they were. Exertion and activity were regarded as dangerous to their health and general well-being. If a woman did not experience illness as a result of such activities, she must not be "truly female."

Thus, fragility and ill health became acceptable and common indications of a refined sensibility and high social status.

The cultivation of upper-class women's ill health as a sign of status and civilized behavior further contributed to the growing conception that the whole process of childbearing was well beyond a refined woman's capability. If a woman was "civilized," it was believed, she needed medical help in delivery. As members of the growing middle class sought to emulate the wealthy classes in all ways, it became critical for them to show that the active economic participation of their wives and daughters to provide for the family's welfare was unnecessary. Female idleness, once considered sinful, was now a status symbol.

Yet in the nineteenth century, birth in some ways became more difficult. Life in the industrialized city and standards of fashionable dress made the image of unhealthy women into reality. Years of use of supports such as corsets and strait lacing seriously altered a woman's anatomy. Malformed torsos and pelvic areas made delivery difficult or impossible, and fetuses were damaged when women continued to wear fashionable undergarments throughout pregnancy.

By the late nineteenth century, the practice of delivery was strikingly different from what it had been 100 years earlier. The strong bonds of female community, particularly noticeable through women's earlier participation in the delivery of a community member, were weakened by popular migration to cities where friends, family members, and neighbors were no longer available. Knowledge about pregnancy and childbirth declined as these topics became increasingly unacceptable in polite conversation; when people did speak of them, they used euphemisms and told fictional stories about where babies come from (for example, brought by the stork or found in a cabbage patch). Even practitioners used such euphemisms when advertising their services.

Drugs were used to hasten delivery, bloodletting was practiced, and obstetrical tools were extensively employed to remove the infant mechanically from the mother. Birth-chair design was first radically altered, and then the chairs themselves gradually were dismissed as archaic items; horizontal delivery in bed was preferred. Such changes may have made doctors physically more comfortable and enhanced their feeling and appearance of control, but they increased the actual burden on the mother and removed control of the event from her. The elements and practices associated with the earlier, more natural approach came to be regarded with apprehension and dread, representing a period before treatment was available.

The nineteenth century also saw the development of the cult of motherhood in the United States, with the glorification of "true womanhood" and the invention of childhood as a distinct stage of life. In her separate domestic sphere, a wife as full-time homemaker and mother was valued as a nurturer, not as a worker. More children were kept at home into their late teens because they were no longer considered economic assets who could be employed in household industries or

bound out as child apprentices. Children were treated as beings in emotional and social formation instead of as miniature adults to be trained in the skills and necessary tasks of society (Kertzer and Barbagli 2002).

By the middle of the nineteenth century, these changes in the view of children had spread from the elite to the urban (and largely Protestant) middle class. Books, magazines, poetry, and fiction were being written especially for children who now enjoyed prolonged childhoods. Parents eagerly read advice books on how best to rear children. Merchants began offering dolls, trains, and other children's playthings, and stores specializing in games, toys, and children's goods opened in larger cities. Attitudes about children's early learning also changed. As late as the 1830s and 1840s, infant schools in the northern states enrolled children as young as three years; reading at an early age was encouraged. Elizabeth Palmer Peabody established the first formally organized kindergarten in Boston in 1860. Influenced by German educational experiments, Peabody sought to offer children learning activities such as clay modeling and paper cutting, rather than specific instruction in reading or writing, or training in the chores and tasks of their elders as in the past. The former activities, she argued, stimulated children's educational development; the latter merely exploited and broke them (Mann and Peabody 1869).

Unfortunately, not all children lived such a privileged existence. Although urban middle-class families could prosper without having to put their children to work, for most families a child was still a necessary economic asset. Children of the poor, the indentured, and the enslaved were still sent out to work in fields, mines, and mills until the enactment of child-labor laws, beginning in 1916. Children were expected to contribute to the well-being and support of the family and work the same hours as adults; they could be prosecuted and punished under the same laws.

While maternity hospitals or lying-in centers were first used only by poor women who were delivered free of charge in exchange for their use as test cases for medical students, birth in hospitals among women of the upper classes and paying customers rose sharply following the introduction of obstetrical anesthesia, known as "twilight sleep," at the turn of the twentieth century.

Delivery in hospitals took place in operating rooms or theaters, with women highly anesthetized on flat tables or hospital gurneys with arm straps, shoulder straps, and stirrups with leg restraints, attended by licensed medical personnel. Birth was a medical procedure conducted by doctors on the unconscious woman. Texts on childbirth available to and intended for women were treatises on home economics: advice on mothering, scientific housekeeping, diapering, and tips for the care and nurturing of children. Little information about becoming pregnant and the processes of gestation and delivery was made available; women were instructed to speak about their condition to no one but their doctors. S. Weir Mitchell of Philadelphia stated in 1888, "Wise women choose their doctors and trust them. The wisest ask the fewest questions" (Banks 1999, 49).

In the early years of the twentieth century, midwives, already radically compromised, increasingly lost access even to indigent women as clients. Hired by governments and municipalities, midwives performed home visits following delivery to check on the mother and to monitor the infant's progress, but were infrequently, if ever, participants in the actual birth process. Only in very rural areas or among the very poor were midwives still the primary birth practitioners. While in the past midwives had been cast as witches, in the early twentieth century, practicing midwives were assumed to be abortionists.

The widespread commonality of experience due to the surge in childbirth in North America from the mid-1940s until the early 1960s ("the baby boom"), combined with massive family movement to the suburbs, provided new forums for contact and community among women. These new circumstances created contexts in which the topic of birth was once again considered acceptable for discourse. As women discussed birth in general and the actual details of the delivery process, they questioned the standard medical approach to childbirth, debated whether medicalized birth in hospitals was really the best approach to delivery, and expressed concern over the absence of the laboring woman in the event.

Bolstered by information about the growing popularity in Europe of methods of birth like *accouchement sans douleur* (birth without pain, the Lamaze method),



Ina Mae Gaskin, left, shows Tamar Kalta, center, how to feel the position of Cayla Whitehead's baby during a class in midwifery at The Farm in Summertown, Tennessee, June 26, 2007. Gaskin, 69, a midwife who never formally studied nursing, helped bring back home birth and lay midwifery from the brink of extinction in America. (AP/Wide World Photos)

women in North America sought not only to reduce unnecessary intervention in their deliveries but also to defeat the patronizing attitudes of professional medicine toward women. From this renewed dialogue on the topic of delivery, the movement for alternative birth began.

Encompassing a wide variety of natural, alternative, and noninterventionist practices, the movement placed value on the mother's role and strove for practices that worked in concert with birth, rather than attempting to dictate and manipulate it. This movement looked to traditional practices, to the era of social birth, and to the growing trend toward self-care for models of practice. Newer approaches such as underwater birth were introduced, and older practices were revived—birth chairs, use of midwives and community women (doulas), and the birth act as a communal event. With the growth of the alternative birth movement, midwives began to take on greater roles in delivery, practicing in hospitals as certified nurse-midwives and certified professional midwives, legally licensed and recognized in some states. Midwives and advocates of natural birth established freestanding birth centers. In an effort to meet the demands of their lucrative clientele, hospitals responded by creating specialized birthing suites that offered a more “homey” atmosphere yet maintained the pathological definition of birth.

Building on the nineteenth-century cult of motherhood and the glorification of childhood, progressive-era reformers from the 1890s to the 1920s stressed new scientific understanding of child development (as well as scientific housekeeping, cooking, and motherhood). These reformers urged that children be removed from the labor force, age-segregated, protected from adult concerns, and shepherded through systematic stages of growth by nurturing mothers and/or trained experts dedicated solely to the needs of their children. By the 1920s, this new style of childrearing had been adopted by most families with sufficient resources, although many others still lacked the means to create and maintain such child-centered households. While parents or guardians were expected to provide their children with moral guidance and oversee their education and training for an occupation, meeting the needs of children, even inventing new needs, became important elements of the consumer economy.

The symbolic leader in this era was pediatrician Dr. Benjamin Spock, following the publication in 1946 of his manual *Baby and Child Care*. Throughout the twentieth century, social, cultural, political, and economic emphases on children, childhood, and childrearing grew by leaps and bounds. Scholarly attention has been brought to bear on the folklore of children, children as a lucrative market, the special vulnerabilities of children, and specialized entertainment, diversions, and activities for children, including camps, educational programs, sports, clubs, clothing, and the burgeoning toy industry. In the early twenty-first century, the children of the poor are included and their futures implicated in consumer-oriented childrearing.

Amanda Carson Banks

See Also Children's Folklore; Family Folklore.

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Children's Folk Heroes

Some elements of children's folklore, especially chants, skipping rhymes, and other such expressions, may contain references to legendary or historical heroes and heroines. Because children's lore has a remarkable stability over long periods of time, the heroic characters featured may be quite old, if of unknown authenticity. Counting-out rhymes like "Oranges and Lemons" include characters

whose identity is long lost in time. The rhyme “Jack and Jill,” in its longer version, has Jill in the role of nurse:

Jack and Jill went up the hill
To fetch a pail of water.
Jack fell down and broke his crown
And Jill came tumbling after.
Up Jack got and home did trot
As fast as he could caper,
While Jill had the job
To plaster his nob
With vinegar and brown paper.

Other nursery rhyme characters with heroic personas include Little Jack Horner and his Christmas pie who: “stuck in his thumb and pulled out a plum / And said ‘what a brave boy am I!’”

Children may also adapt heroes and heroines from tale traditions into their own expressions, as in the case of these skipping rhymes:

Cinderella in the cellar
Making love to Rockefeller
Cinderella dressed in yella
Turns around like this.

Or:

Cinderella dressed in yella
Went downstairs to meet her fella
On the way her panties busted.
How many people were disgusted?
1, 2, 3, 4 . . .

Children are also skilled at adapting known historical heroes and heroines into their lore. An Australian children's rhyme makes use of the figure of Captain James Cook, who claimed the continent for Britain in 1770:

Captain Cook chased a chook [chicken]
All around Australia
When he got back he caught a smack
For being a naughty sailor.

Another sailor hero features in this widespread skipping rhyme:

Christopher Columbus was a brave man
 He sailed to America in an old tin can
 The waves got higher, higher, higher, and over.
 How many miles did he go?
 1, 2, 3, 4 . . .

Many versions of these and other children's rhymes (as opposed to nursery rhymes) are scatological or intendedly obscene.

Since the rise of mass media at the start of the twentieth century, children's lore has increasingly appropriated characters from popular fiction, including comics, film, television, and advertising. Frequently such characters are parodied or otherwise satirized, often rudely, as in the case of the popular song and Disney film about Davy Crockett during the 1950s. This early example of "cross-marketing" involved the sale of Crockett items like knives, guns, and the all-important coonskin cap. It also generated a good deal of childhood and young adolescent "Crockett-lore," including jokes (Why does Davy Crockett have three ears? He has a left ear, a right ear, and a wild frontier.) and numerous parodies of the movie's theme song, which became a hit in Britain, America, Australia, and elsewhere. The original lyrics of the song concerned the circumstances of Crockett's birth, his bear-slaying exploits, and his besting of his father, all at the precocious age of three. In children's lore, these lyrics rapidly became the following, recorded in many variants around the English-speaking world:

Born on a table-top in Joe's cafe
 Greasiest joint in the USA
 Poisoned his mother with DDT
 Shot his father with a .303
 Davy, Davy Crockett
 The man who is no good.

Other media heroes incorporated into children's lore include Hopalong Cassidy, Daniel Boone, Mr. Magoo (who, irresistibly, "did some poo"), Tarzan (who "swings and calls" but meets with a painful accident), and Shirley Temple, among others. More recent heroes and heroines of popular fiction that appear in childlore include Batman and Robin, Wonder Woman, Superman, Superwoman, the Addams Family, the Simpsons, and Mickey Mouse. As with much folklore, characters selected for adaptation in these ways are predominantly male.

It is important to note that the treatment of these characters is an aspect of the folklore *of* children, as opposed to that *for* children, like nursery rhymes and “fairy” tales. The former is the genuine, traditional expression of children’s culture, a culture often in conflict with the adult world that—tries, at least—to control it, while the latter is what adults, usually in the form of parents and teachers, present to children.

Graham Seal

See Also Childbirth and Childrearing; Children’s Folklore; Cinderella; Family Folklore; Hero/Heroine, Folk; Jack and the Beanstalk; Little Red Riding Hood; Rapunzel; Sleeping Beauty; Snow White.

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Children's Folklore

Those traditions that are learned, transmitted, and performed by children without the influence of adult supervision or formal instruction. Historically, concepts of childhood have varied widely. According to social historian Philippe Aries, in Western Europe up until about the twelfth or thirteenth centuries, children were depicted in paintings and other visual media as miniature adults, complete with adult clothing and facial expressions. By the seventeenth century, there was a growing tendency to recognize and acknowledge children as separate from adults and worthy of special attention regarding their dress, food, behavior, and so forth. Today (and certainly in the United States), children are generally regarded as a privileged class with special schools, toys, amusements, and medical care.

It was only in the late nineteenth century that the peculiar traditions of childhood—or children’s folklore—were noticed, collected, and documented. The focus of scholarly interest in children’s folklore has been primarily on Western European culture.

The distinctive folklore that children acquire and perform on their own exists within what folklorists characterize as the “child-to-child conduit.” In general, scholars agree that such childhood traditions are an integral part of the overall enculturation process because through mastering the rules of the games or the literary structure of oral genres such as riddles and rhymes, children learn some of the fundamental aspects of cooperation and strategy that are so integral to contemporary Western society. Furthermore, much of the interaction that takes place when children play games together involves negotiation of rules and the status of various players more than the actual performance of the game itself. Many researchers believe that analyzing the social interactions in which the games are embedded is at least as important as documenting the exact texts and tunes of the songs children sing or the rhymes they recite during hand-clap routines.

Children's folklore contains practically all of the principal genres of tradition, including games, narratives of many kinds, songs, customs, and material culture. The defining characteristic, of course, is that the targeted traditions circulate within an informal children's network or folk group. A growing body of recent research concerns scatological materials, which are more common among children than many more conservative educators have been willing to accept.

Comparative scholarly research makes it clear that many of these genres of children's folklore are extremely widespread, enjoying international distribution in form if not in language. Riddling, storytelling, and games, for example, are almost universal among European, Australian, Canadian, and American children.

One notable aspect of children's folklore is the rapid transmission of the ever-changing materials over vast distances, such as from one coast of the United States to the other in a matter of days. The general hypothesis is that children, just as adults, rely on the media (including long-distance telephone service as well as television and other electronic media) for the spread and transmission of these shared materials. The mass media certainly play a role in the transmission of traditions that involve popular culture, such as games played with various action figures or the wearing of Halloween costumes based on media characters.

Another characteristic of children's folklore is that many of the genres involve both a kinesic component and an oral component, as in singing games, jumping rope and its distinctive rhymes, or hand-clapping routines. The physical action and the verbal texts are so integrated that children find it almost impossible to satisfactorily perform one without the other, as evidenced when researchers ask for jump-rope rhymes without letting the children jump rope as they recite them. Likewise, many children who are accustomed to the traditional versions of the game cannot maintain the intricate rhythms of jumping rope unless they recite the rhymes. Folklorists in the past who collected the verbal components without

Lullaby

A type of song used to soothe a baby to sleep; also known as a cradle song. It is a widespread oral genre, found to a lesser extent in written and recorded forms. The large number of lullaby examples from diverse societies suggests that lullabies are nearly as universal as childbirth and children. Like laments and wedding songs, the lullaby is a special occasion genre usually tied to its function, in this case, to reassure and calm a child to hasten slumber.

Lullabic lyrics commonly are built around short, repetitious phrases or stanzas that engage a range of linguistic modes, from adult language to 'baby talk' vocables or combinations thereof. The semantic content that marks a song unambiguously as a lullaby contains phrases of endearment for the child and makes reference to going to sleep. Examples with less overt lyrics also are found on any number of topics, used, it has been suggested, because their rhythmic structure is suitable to the song's function. Bess Lomax Hawes's own family, for instance, favored the Protestant hymn "I Am Bound for the Promised Land."

Although there has been less research on music than on lyrics, lullabies generally are melodically repetitious—monotony, for lullabies, appears to be functional—with rhythmic and metric characteristics that correspond to the culturally defined kinetic motions of rocking a child. Some lullabies, however, lack one or both of these components; certain Hopi examples, for instance, contain no metric pulse and show no coordination between kinetic and musical rhythm. Lullabies employed within literate or concert traditions may be elaborated with contrasting musical structures, as with those of Brahms and Berg.

In common performance, lullabies underscore the close relationship between parent (usually the mother) and child. The intimate context suggests that lullabies are not invariably derived from precomposed (lullabic) sources, oral based or otherwise. Though most societies cherish established lullabies, many performances are undoubtedly simply personal musical/textual expressions of the parent's feeling for the child.

Leslie C. Gay Jr.

the physical components of the games were usually collecting "fossilized" memories from adult informants rather than collecting from the children, the active bearers of the traditions.

Perhaps one reason for the widespread distribution of children's traditions is inherent in the very nature of tradition itself, namely, the informal, noninstitutional nature of the acquisition, maintenance, and transmission of these various cultural items, whether they be oral, customary, or material. The informality and expansiveness of this vast communicative network is due, in large part, to its lack of dependence on literacy and fixed form. Children, although taught in school to read and write, operate among themselves in a world of informal and oral communication, unimpeded by the necessity of maintaining and transmitting information by

Tooth Fairy, The

Fictional children's heroine, a fairy who is said to take away the milk teeth of children when they fall out, often leaving a small payment. The tooth fairy tradition has been little studied and only reached the literature in the late 1950s. However, many people have recollections of this custom, and of its heroine, going back to at least the 1920s. There are numerous variations on the tradition, which has become increasingly commercialized in recent years and which, despite the existence of folk traditions concerning the disposal of teeth, may well have a commercial origin. The basic elements involve taking a milk tooth after it has fallen out and leaving it under a pillow or in a glass of water when the child goes to sleep at night. In the morning, the tooth has disappeared, and a small coin may be found in its place, 'payment' from the tooth fairy.

While there is some linking of fairies and children's teeth in Robert Herrick's *Hesperides* (1648), there appears to be no such thing as a 'tooth fairy' before the twentieth century. Nonetheless, there is an extensive body of world folklore dealing with the disposal of baby teeth. In his 1928 work *Folklore of the Teeth*, L. Kanner surveyed the various customs involving the casting away of milk teeth. These customs include such things as crushing the teeth, in which state they may be ingested by the parent, usually the mother, or, as in Macedonia, the teeth may be thrown to the crows. There is a wide and frequent association of milk teeth disposal with mice, which may have biblical origins. In his otherwise wide-ranging and comprehensive survey, Kanner makes no mention of a tooth fairy.

Graham Seal

written means. In fact, one could theoretically regard the performance, process, and content of children's folklore as a paradigm for folklore in general.

The concept of the folk group is fundamental to folkloristics. Folk groups, quite simply, are groups of people, no matter how large or how small, who are validated and bonded primarily by the traditions they share. Children, therefore, constitute one of the largest and most accessible folk groups that folklorists regularly study.

Of course, within the larger folk group of children as a whole are innumerable smaller and more intimate folk groups in which children interact and transmit their almost infinite repertoire of folklore. It is also likely that any individual child can be part of numerous such groups, including the child's family, grade cohort and playground playmates at school, neighborhood playmates of varying ages, day-care members, as well as many others such as groups at church, at camp, on vacation, and so forth. The guiding principle in recognizing children's folk groups is that they provide a context in which the children can teach, learn, and share their distinctive traditions without outside influence or interference.

Because the concept of the folk group is integral to folklore theory, researchers do not regard those materials that adults teach to children as being within the



Girls playing Double Dutch, a jump rope game in which two ropes are turned in opposite directions with one or more players jumping simultaneously. (Getty Images)

purview of children's folklore. The social matrix within which playground supervisors or day-care attendants teach songs, games, and such to groups of children under their care is quite different from the process of transmission when children learn from and teach one another. If, however, a child who has learned a particular item from a teacher at school in turn teaches a version of that item to younger brothers and sisters at home and then that item becomes part of the active repertoire of that small folk group, the item would be of interest to folklorists.

Age is also a factor that must be taken into consideration in identifying children's folklore because the traditions commonly shared by children are quite distinctive from those of adolescents. In general, childhood has been regarded as the span from kindergarten through about the sixth year of school or about ages five through twelve. Recently, the pervasiveness of child care for the children of working parents has lowered the age bracket to about age four because the social context of many day-care centers is quite conducive to very young children learning traditional items from the older children with whom they are in such constant contact. The limited language acquisition and undeveloped physical coordination of very young children prevent children's folklore from circulating among those younger than about four years old.

Until the 1960s, the main studies of children's folklore were in the English language, undertaken primarily in England and the United States. Since the mid-1970s, Australian folklorists have produced a sizable and well-regarded body of scholarship and collections. Scholars throughout Europe also have begun to publish collections and analytical studies based on their fieldwork.

The earliest studies of children's folklore were the massive collections undertaken by the noted British scholar Lady Bertha Gomme (1894–1898) and the American William Wells Newell, a founder of the American Folklore Society and first editor of the *Journal of American Folklore* (1888–1900). Both of these early scholars in the discipline of folklore were interested in preserving what they regarded as the dying traditions of childhood; both also focused on games, especially games with a spoken or sung component.

Since the 1940s, American and British folklorists have produced a large body of scholarship, encompassing both field-collected material and analytical studies. Dorothy Howard was a pioneer in the technique of collecting directly from children rather than focusing on adult memories of their childhood traditions; she advocated this technique in her 1938 dissertation on ball-bouncing rhymes, one of the first analytical studies of childlore. Howard continued her study of children's folklore throughout her long lifetime. The most influential phase of her career was the period she spent studying and collecting children's folklore in Australia in 1954–1955 on a Fulbright grant. Her work greatly influenced a number of younger scholars, including New Zealand native Brian Sutton-Smith and June Factor of Australia, founder of the *Australian Children's Newsletter* and the author, collector, and editor of numerous studies of Australian childlore.

Perhaps the most significant of Dorothy Howard's protégés were the British husband-and-wife team of Peter and Iona Opie, who depended on her early in their careers for advice and support. The Opies devoted their professional lives to the documentation of the world of childhood, including not only folklore but also literature and commercially produced toys and games.

A number of studies have followed the trend established in the Opies' *Lore and Language of Schoolchildren*, the most highly regarded collection in the field. The annotated collections of Simon Bronner and Mary and Herbert Knapp are widely used as textbooks in American folklore courses. In Finland, Leea Virtanen edited a similar volume, *Children's Lore*. There are, of course, numerous other studies in this field.

In 1979, the Children's Folklore Section of the American Folklore Society was established. This section has flourished over the years and produces the journal *Children's Folklore Review*. A *Handbook of Children's Folklore* was published in 1995.

A perusal of the early studies of children's folklore reveals the outdated and largely discredited theoretical styles and trends of the times. For example, Lady

Gomme, an ardent survivalist, was convinced that the words and lyrics of children's songs and rhymes contained references to or were survivals of ancient rites. In the game of London Bridge, for example, she saw evidence of ancient "foundation sacrifices" made when bridges were built.

Children's folklore also was used in the service of another popular late nineteenth-century theory, namely, devolution. According to this theory, children's traditions were really misunderstood remnants of adult traditions that had filtered down or "devolved" from adults of previous generations to the current generation of children. Another feature of this theory held that children represented the savage stage of human development and therefore had to be civilized (in part, by learning how to behave) before they could become responsible adults.

Those who study and document children's folklore today grapple with what Brian Sutton-Smith termed the "triviality barrier" or the lack of respect stemming from the refusal of scholars in other fields and disciplines to take seriously any research dealing with the world of children. Folklorists are unusual among humanists and social scientists for their acceptance of children and their traditions on the children's own terms, as a folk group worthy of study in its own right rather than an adjunct of an older or more sophisticated body of informants.

Collecting and documenting children's folklore presents both problems and delights for the serious researcher. In general, children do not perform their folklore within earshot of adults, in order to avoid the interference or derision of those adults who are on the other side of the "triviality barrier." Folklorists, therefore, must first convince the children from whom they wish to collect that they are seriously interested in the materials and that the children will not be punished for revealing any traditions of which adults generally disapprove, such as scatological jokes and rhymes.

The spontaneity of much of children's folklore frequently precludes advance notice of its performance. Consequently, folklorists must be ready to note down or observe these performances as they occur, which frequently makes video taping or audio recording difficult. However, members of a play group who are very comfortable with a particular adult researcher usually are willing to perform their traditional lore "on cue" if the researcher asks them to do so. The ideal research situation would be to document the same item both as a spontaneous performance and under prearranged circumstances and then compare the two.

Another approach to collecting children's folklore is by way of what many call "adult memory culture"—adult memories of the traditions they knew as children. This was the preferred method of the early nineteenth-century folklorists. Since many adults have a tendency to remember selectively, this method is less reliable than collecting directly from the children themselves. Adult memory culture, however, does provide a diachronic context for contemporary children's folklore.

Sylvia Grider

See Also Childbirth and Childrearing; Family Folklore.

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Chinese Folklore

Preserving Chinese Folklore

Elements of geography, culture, history, and belief provide a framework for a discussion of folklore in China. It should not be surprising that in such a diverse land dealing with folklore presents challenges. Yet the Chinese have taken a very active hand in collecting and organizing every facet of folk culture all over China since 1949, though these efforts have at times been impeded by periods of political unrest. In the 1950s and 1980s, the Chinese government sponsored massive folksong and folk story collection projects, resulting in over 1.8 million stories and over 3 million folksongs gathered from all fifty-six ethnic nationalities. Collecting

and study projects are still carried out by folklore workers and scholars at local, regional, and national levels. In recent years, scholars in research institutes and universities such as the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (*Zhongguo shehui kexue yuan*), Beijing University (*Beijing daxue*), and the Central Nationalities University (*Zhongyang minzu daxue*) have experimented with new approaches to folklore analysis and fieldwork, influenced to some degree by Western trends.

Oral Folklore Traditions

A vast array of orally delivered verbal art traditions can be found across the Chinese landscape. Although local tradition bearers have their own terminology for forms of verbal art, Chinese folklorists categorize these traditions with a number of specialized terms, most derived from nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Western folklore studies (in a situation similar to Japan). Folk narratives include folktales (*minjian gushi*), myths (*shenhua*), legends (*chuanshuo*), animal tales (*dongwu gushi*), and so forth. Prosodic narratives include epics (*shishi*) and narrative poems (*xushishi*) similar to long ballads or lyrical fairy tales. There are numerous terms and divisions for folksongs (*minge* or *minjian geyao*), including love songs (*qingge*), drinking songs (*jiuge*), wedding laments (*kujiage*), and work songs (*laodongge*). Some oral forms such as epics are found only among some of the ethnic minority groups, though other types are very widespread. In some instances, several ethnic groups may share very similar traditions, especially certain of the antiphonal folksong traditions of the northwest and southwest. Other categories include proverbs (*yanyu*) and jokes (*xiaohua*).

Special terms denominate forms of storytelling and drama. The general term “art of melodies” (*quyi*) is applied to a diffuse body of musical narratives (though a few have relatively little music) that were practiced by professionals and in some cases avocational or amateur performers. Once numbering over 300 styles, these local varieties were popular throughout the Han Chinese areas. A few forms are also recognized among some ethnic minority groups such as the Manchu of northeast China and the Bai nationality of Yunnan province. Many storytelling and local drama traditions were associated with urban entertainment districts, markets, temple fairs, or teahouses, and in some cases had written correlates in vernacular literature. Existing local drama traditions (*difangxi*) tend to be more “literary,” professional, and urban than folk operas (*xiaoxi*), which are usually closely related to rural song-and-dance traditions. Whether to classify many of these forms as “folk” or “popular” entertainments is debatable. Similar questions exist about the classification of local musical styles and material culture.

The following sections will introduce major bodies of tradition, often at regional or local levels. As reflected in the preceding paragraphs, core categories of folklore are sometimes different from those based on European models, though many categories do readily overlap, sometimes with qualifying definitions. In some

instances, native terms have been utilized. Given the huge corpus of folklore in China, it is difficult to give a comprehensive picture in limited space. The goal here is to present an overview that will allow some sense of the big picture, while illuminating a few representative local traditions drawn mostly from southern and southwestern China.

Myths

Accounts of Han Chinese myths date to records such as *The Classic of Mountains and Seas (Shan hai jing)*, based on material compiled between the third century BCE and the second century CE. These early texts include accounts of the creation of the earth and cosmos out of chaos and tell of the creator Pan Gu, whose body transformed into the myriad phenomena of the natural world. Among the early beings are the male Fuxi and the female Nü Wa, who shaped humans from clay and patched holes that had formed in the sky. Another figure, Hou Yi, is an archer who at the bequest of Emperor Yao shoots down nine of the ten suns overheating the earth. Important gods that figure in many myths and other stories and folk beliefs include the Jade Emperor, Queen Mother of the West, and the Yellow Emperor. A favorite of these early accounts is associated with the Mid-Autumn Festival (*Zhongqiu jie*), held on the fifteenth day of the eighth lunar month. The archer Hou Yi meets a charming young woman named Chang'e. Wishing to live with her forever, Hou Yi convinces the powerful Queen



Nü Wa, Chinese goddess of creation. This image of Nü Wa is from a tenth-century stone carving in the famous cave complex at Dunhuang in Chinese Central Asia. The work reflects the influence of Indian art, a result of cultural exchange along the Silk Road, a trade route linking Japan with the Mediterranean. (Library of Congress)

Mother of the West (who controls the peaches of immortality) to give him a special elixir. Versions differ over what happens next, but eventually Chang'e drinks the elixir, becomes an immortal, and flies up to the Moon, where she lives today with her pet rabbit. A number of Han myths have parallels in the folklore of many ethnic groups in southern China, and some of the myths (such as that of Pan Gu) may be of ancient southern origin.

In recent decades, lengthy epics charting creation have been collected among Miao, Yao, Yi, Hani, Lahu, Dong, Drung, Dai, and other ethnic groups in the south and particularly the southwest of the country. Common motifs include separation and coalescence of heavy and light material out of chaos, measuring the seam between the resulting heaven and earth, sewing the sky and earth together, propping up the sky with pillars, creation of living things, early generations of protohumans or giants, destruction of life by a great flood, re-peopling of the earth (often by a female creator or as a result of incest between a brother and sister), the distribution of the peoples of earth (often the historic ethnic groups within a particular region), and sometimes the acquisition of language, agriculture, marriage, and so on. A calabash gourd figures in many of the southern minority epics, especially as an ark to carry the brother and sister who escape the flood. In one Miao epic from Guizhou province an important creator figure is a butterfly called Mais Bangx (Mother Butterfly), who lays eggs that hold the early ancestors of humans, tigers, dragons, mythical birds, and so on in a sacred sweet gum tree that later splits into myriad living beings.

Narrative Poems

Narrative poems ranging from a few dozen lines to some of the world's longest epics are found in the northern border regions and the mountains of the southwest. The northern epics include the Kirgiz epic *Manas* (claimed to be the longest epic poem in history), the Mongol epic *Janggar*, and the epic of the Tibetan hero Gesar. All three epics feature divine, exemplary heroes who win contests, take beautiful brides, fight evil forces, build kingdoms, and lead armies of highly skilled warriors. Flying and talking horses, shape-shifting, and battles with enemies (human and monster) are typical themes. Multi-headed anthropomorphs known as *manggus* are typical foes in the Mongol *Janggar* epic as well as Mongol versions of *Gesar*. A singer or relays of singers recite the epics in the open air at festivals. Some Tibetan singers employ the convention of "paper-singing," in which a singer holds a blank sheet of paper in front of him as if reading as he recites the epic. In recent decades singers have included both men and women. Heroic epics and fairy tale-like narrative poems circulate among several Yi subgroups in the southwest. Typical is the story of Zhyge Alu, a Yi martial hero whose exploits are told among the Nuosu of northern Yunnan and Sichuan. An illegitimate child, he was born after drops of blood from a flying eagle stained

his young mother's skirt. Left in the wild, the child was raised by dragons. Later, Zhyge Alu is said to have shot down the excess suns and moons in the sky.

Among the Sani of the Stone Forest area of Yunnan, narrative poems are sung about Ashima, a lovely, hard-working young woman who was captured and imprisoned by an evil landlord. Her brother (in more recent versions, her lover) Ahei rescues her, but on the way home she is killed by a sudden flood. Her inspiring echo is still said to resound in the strange limestone formations in the region. The epic tradition of the Dai, a people located in the Xishuangbanna (Sip-songpanna) area of southern Yunnan province, has been strongly influenced by Theravada Buddhism.

Folktales and Legends

Folklorists, such as the eminent Zhong Jingwen (1903–2002), have researched folktales throughout the land and identified several as being especially widespread among the Han and some minority groups, existing in oral performance and written media. These include the story of Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai, star-crossed young lovers, the latter of whom is a young woman who dresses as a male student; the Weaving Maid and Cowherd (*Niulang zhinu*), divided lovers who by celestial mandate meet once a year on a bridge of magpies in the sky; and Meng Jiangnu, the tale of a woman who searches for the bones of her husband who was conscripted to work on the Great Wall.

Local folk story traditions include southern tales common to many ethnic groups of a snake who marries a virtuous young woman and later changes into a prince. The trickster Effendi (Afanti) is the clever hero of many Uyghur nationality tales from the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in northwest China. Tales of capable hunter-heroes called *mergen* are told among the Daur, Oroqen, and Hezhen nationalities that live in and near the forests of the northeast. Tales of frightful mountain-dwelling Cannibal Mother (*Coqot Amat*) are still common among the Nuosu subgroup of Yi in the Liangshan Mountains of southern Sichuan. Many animal tales have been collected all over China.

Virtually every mountain, hill, unusual rock, stream, river, pool, cave, gorge, grove, ancient tree, temple, bridge, city wall, and other features of the inhabited terrain have one or more legends connected to them. A prime example is the Li River near the tourist site of Guilin in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. Popular with tourists since at least the Tang period (618–907 CE)—many scholar-poets having left their poems carved on mountain or cave walls—this site has inspired legends about nearly every one of the oddly shaped karst mountains lining the river, beginning with Elephant Trunk Hill near the city.

Many regions, cities, and towns have legends associated with exemplary inhabitants, unusual characters, and benefactors, some of whom are local gods. For instance, many legends surround the Huaqing Pond in the Tang dynasty capital of

Chang'an (today's Xi'an), where the incomparably lovely concubine Yang Guifei was said to have bathed and cavorted with Emperor Xuanzong. In the ancient Yangzi delta city of Suzhou, stories about the sixteenth-century poet-painter Tang Bohu are still part of local storytelling as well as many drama traditions. In the nearby city of Yangzhou, many legends exist about the eight unusual painters in the eighteenth century, still known as the "Yangzhou Eight Eccentrics" (*Yangzhou baguai*). Bai nationality towns in western Yunnan have legends about their *benzhu*, or beneficent ancestor, whose spirit looks over the welfare of the populace.

One Bai legend is associated with a natural feature called "Butterfly Spring" near the small town of Zhoucheng. According to a version told by Zhang Qisheng, a hunter named Du Chaoxuan heard that a giant, supernatural snake was eating local people. Surprising the snake, he managed to shoot it with an arrow before it escaped. The next day, Du went to a nearby spring and saw two young women washing a bloodied cloth on a rock. Though at first he suspected they might be incarnations of the giant snake, they told him how they had been forced to become the wounded snake's wives. They then helped Du steal the snake's magic sword, whereupon he sliced the creature into three parts. Although the women begged to become his wives, he left them behind to go hunting in the mountains. The women were so distraught that they drowned themselves in the spring. Returning from the mountains the next day, Du heard of the women's fate. Wracked with grief, the snake-killing hero jumped into the spring and drowned. Soon after, three butterflies, two leading and one following behind, emerged from the spring. Today many colorful butterflies gather on an ancient tree nearby.

Popular religion in China continues to be a source of legends about spirits (*shen*), immortals (*xian*), bodhisattvas (*pusa*), and wise men, many of whom are regarded as being actual people in earlier ages. The "Eight Immortals" of popular Daoism are especially well represented in oral traditions, dramas, and festival parades. The Ming Dynasty vernacular romance, *Tales of Gods and Spirits* (*Fengshen yanyi*), includes many legends associated with historical figures such as an early adviser of the Zhou Dynasty kings, Jiang Taigong (who learned patience while fishing without hooks), which have correlates in oral tradition. In certain areas of Guizhou, the work is the basis of productions of folk ritual-drama. In recent years, images of legendary leaders of the communist party, including Mao Zedong, have been integrated into local religious beliefs in some rural areas.

Folksongs

China has one of the world's richest heritages of folksongs, written records beginning with the fifth century BCE collection the *Book of Songs* (*Shijing*), based in part on local folksong traditions, and the *yuefu* folk ballads dating to the Han Dynasty (220 BCE–220 CE). Large collections of folksongs by literati such as Feng Menglong date to the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644 CE). Large-scale collection by

modern intellectuals began around the time of the May Fourth Movement in 1919 and continued into the 1930s. During this time, Western folklore methods began to be utilized by young intellectuals like Liu Fu, Gu Jiegang, Zhou Zuoren, and Zhong Jingwen. In the 1950s and 1980s, the government of the People's Republic of China launched massive folksong collecting projects. Huge cadres of folksong collectors (many of whom were students) were mobilized at national, provincial, and county levels all over the country, resulting in collection, editing (sometimes for political correctness), and publication in both public and "inner-circulating" print media.

Folksongs in China include courting songs, bridal laments (sung by brides leaving home), hosting songs, drinking songs, ritual songs asking for blessings and good luck, funeral songs and chants, work songs (sung in rice fields, on fishing boats, and at the loom), lullabies, and other themes. While many folksongs are associated with rural cultures or labor, a kind of refined lyrical singing tradition called *xiaodiao* (small tunes) was common in urban settings all over China, sometimes performed by professional singers. Receiving and sending off guests are important acts in Chinese social interaction. In many parts of China (particularly in the ethnic minority areas today) hosts and guests traditionally exchange songs of welcome and departure. Among some ethnic groups, songs may also be sung during banquets in praise of guests or hosts and conveying good wishes and praise.

Drinking songs may also be part of banquets, drinking parties, and festivals, depending on the ethnic group. Various forms of distilled alcohol made from rice, wheat, maize, and millet, as well as thin beer-like beverages made from fermented rice, buckwheat, barley, and other grains or vegetables, figure importantly in the social cultures in many parts of China. Drinking is usually associated with eating, and singing may be a part of home and public banquets or after-banquet activities (impromptu sings or karaoke sessions) all over China. Drink also plays a role in many rituals, in which alcohol is offered along with songs and chants to various gods, local nature spirits, or ancestral spirits in order to gain blessings.

Although arranged marriages were for millennia the norm for Han Chinese, many ethnic groups allowed young people to engage in courting activities from the early teen years until marriage. Popular activities in the courting process were singing gatherings or parties in which young men and women sang antiphonal folksongs to each other. The antiphonal style, in which songs are traded back and forth between singers in a kind of song talk, was an important social skill. Today in many areas of northwest and southwest China, courting songs are still sung in gatherings by both unmarried and married people. In some areas, the best singers are middle-aged or older.

In northwest China, a common style of folksong among many ethnic groups, including Han, Salar, Hui, Dongxiang, Tu (Monguor), and Yugu is the so-called *hua'er* or "flower songs," known in some places as *shaonian* (often translated as

“courtship songs”). Rural people in Shanxi and Shaanxi sing a style of song known as *xintianyou* while working in the vast “yellow earth” areas of north-central China. In many parts of China, short lyrics, often sung in antiphonal form, have for centuries been called *shan’ge* (mountain songs) as well as by many local terms. Such songs were especially popular in the Yangzi delta and all across southern China. Today they are still popular in parts of Fujian, Hunan, Guizhou, Guangxi, and Yunnan, though in many places fewer young people know how to sing.

In the area of Liuzhou, a small city in northern Guangxi, mountain songs are a pan-ethnic phenomenon. Singers from Zhuang, Dong, Mulam, Maonan, Han, and other groups sing similar songs in their own languages as well as in Chinese. Song contests are still held during the mid-autumn festival at Carp Peak (*Yufeng shan*) in Liuzhou city, where most songs are sung in a southwest version of Mandarin Chinese. A common singing style features two male singers simultaneously singing in turn with two female singers. Such antiphonal lyrics are filled with nature imagery (often stressing reproduction) and feature similes, metaphors, and sometimes riddles. In the past, young people got to know each other through lengthy song exchanges, and lovers or spouses were chosen by the mental dexterity and skill exhibited by the singers. Today groups of older singers gather in parks or at riversides to limber their voices and minds in impromptu tests of singing skill.

The following excerpt from a song exchange comes from the Dong nationality of the Guizhou and Guangxi borderlands. Songs are sung on intricately constructed covered wooden bridges, near ancient trees, stream banks, and springs, or in other special places. The reference to “black rice” is a metaphor for eating a dark variety of rice in the marriage ceremony. The singers were Wu Jinsong and Lu Jinmeng:

Female: You early on had steady lovers,
Why do you still use such flowery, tricky words?
You don’t dare to talk straight,
But last year we already heard
That a lovely maiden
Already ate your home’s “black rice.”

Male: I have no lover,
I’m really telling you the truth;
My house has no cooking smoke,
There’s no fire inside,
At dawn no rice treadle sounds,
At dusk no happy spinning-wheel songs.
If you wish to say I have a lover,
Then that lover is you.
The lovers are, in fact, we two.

Folksongs have been incorporated into local-color films, orchestral music, and other media. The 1961 film *Third Sister Liu* (*Liu Sanjie*) featured romanticized versions of Zhuang antiphonal singing. Over thirty years later, a musical version, produced by renowned film director Zhang Yimou in 2003, was staged live in natural settings in scenic Yangshuo, Guangxi. The film *Ashima* (1964) featured artistically enhanced folksongs of the Yi subgroup called Sani. In the early 1980s, folksongs from the barren northern Shaanxi (Shaanbei) area were interwoven into the script of the innovative “Fifth Generation” film *Yellow Earth* (*Huang tudi*), which featured more folksinging than dialogue. Folksongs and music from various ethnic groups have influenced composers such as Nie Er in the 1930s and 1940s. More recently, composer Bright Sheng has drawn on folksongs and music in northwest China in his orchestral compositions. Urban folksinger Yang Yi has recreated rural folksongs under the influence of American singer Bob Dylan. Yi (Nuosu subgroup) minority poets such as Jidi Majia and Aku Wuwu have drawn extensively on folksongs, myths, chants, and customs in their poetic works.

Storytelling and Musical Performance

A vast body of narrative styles that often combine music and speaking is known as *quyi* (art of melodies). These styles, performed by professional or avocational performers, range in length from a few dozen lines to stories that can be told two hours a day for up to a year. A number of regional styles and hundreds of local traditions are most common among the Han Chinese. Many of these traditions were performed primarily in urban entertainment venues. Relatively few survive today.

Several closely related traditions of musical storytelling have been popular in the Yangzi delta region of eastern China for several hundred years. Similar traditions such as the Cantonese “wooden fish” (*mukyu*) style range through ethnic Han cultures southward along the coast. Incarnations of these traditions today include the *tanci* (plucking lyrics) storytelling styles, sometimes translated as “chantefable” or “story-singing,” still performed in and around the cities of Suzhou, Wuxi, Yangzhou, and Hangzhou in the Yangzi delta. Performances are presented in two-hour sets in special story houses as middle-aged and older patrons sip tea while they listen to the stories unfold in a mixture of singing, narration, and dramatic roles. Stories are usually delivered by a pair of storytellers (either same or mixed gender) who accompany themselves on the three-stringed banjo (*sanxian*) and the *pipa* (a pear-shaped lute). Performances of storytelling without musical accompaniment called *pinghua* or “straight storytelling” (called *pingshu* in Beijing and Sichuan) are held in the same story houses and usually delivered by solo performers. Together the two storytelling traditions, which share many stylistic features and history, are called *pingtan*.

Traditional love stories between “gifted scholars and talented beauties” such as *Pearl Pagoda* (*Zhenzhu ta*), *Jade Dragonfly* (*Yu qingting*), *Etched Gold Phoenix* (*Miaojin feng*), *Three Smiles* (*Sanxiao*), *Pair of Pearl Phoenixes* (*Shuang zhufeng*),

and *West Wing* (*Xixiangji*) have been a major component in the *tanci* repertoire since at least the early nineteenth century. A number of these stories are also represented in local drama traditions. Stories in the *pinghua* repertoire are often about outlaw or martial heroes and tend to involve amazing displays of stylized gestures and verbal agility, which may include rhyming, folk ditties, and paralinguistic sounds of everything from firecrackers to a fritter rolling on the floor. Stories include heroes such as the twelfth-century patriot Yue Fei and episodes from works of vernacular fiction such as *Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo yanyi*), *Journey to the West* (*Xiyouji*), *Outlaws of the Marsh* (*Shuihu zhuan*), and *Three Heroes and Five Gallants* (*Sanxia wuyi*). The Yangzhou *pinghua* story about the outlaw hero Wu Song and his fight with a tiger high on a mountain ridge after a drinking bout in a tavern is among the best known of the *pinghua* narratives. *Tanci* performances usually begin with a lyrical ballad known as a *kaipian* (opening piece), many of which are also sung at informal gatherings of amateurs or by professionals in contests.

Storytelling traditions (with written vernacular correlates) known as precious volumes (*baojuan*) were once widespread, some with ritual components incorporating Buddhism and other beliefs. A surviving tradition from the Yangzi delta is known as *Jingjiang jiangjing* (Jingjiang telling scriptures). Stories of local gods and devotees as well as more secular tales are told in lengthy “services” combining narration and singing in performances led by a specialist known as a “Buddha-head” (*fotou*) and enhanced by a special chorus comprised of older audience members.

A number of related styles of rap-like ballads known as *kuaiban* (clapper-tales) and *kuaishu* (fast-story) exist in northeast China. Performers sing stories to the beat provided by bamboo, wooden, or metal clappers, depending on the tradition. Very short in comparison to some of the southern forms like Suzhou *tanci*, these story songs include humorous anecdotes and condensed tales of heroes from vernacular literature such as Wu Song. Styles of narrative using drums, sometimes in concert with stringed or other percussion instruments, include the *dagu* (big drum) traditions of Beijing and the extinct form of Manchu (Manju) drum storytelling known as *zidishu* (bannermans’ songs). Some *zidishu* texts relate passages from works of vernacular fiction, including the famous eighteenth-century novel-length work *Dream of the Red Chamber* (*Honglou meng*). Many similar storytelling traditions using a variety of instruments are found in Han areas all over China, though in some areas traditions are a mere shadow of what they were in the past.

Opera

Images of Beijing opera tend to dominate perceptions of Chinese traditional drama. While that particular dramatic form rose to the level of a national art in the late twentieth century, its roots are in local forms of drama that coalesced in Beijing during the early nineteenth century. Besides the Beijing tradition, many regional forms still have followings today, including the Cantonese *Yueju*;

gezaixi (*gezai* opera) of southern Fujian, Taiwan, and Chinese communities in Southeast Asia; *Kunju* (from Kunshan in Jiangsu province) and *Yueju* (also known as Shaoxing opera) of the Yangzi delta; and *bangzi qiangxi* (named for the wooden clappers used in musical accompaniment) in northern China, including Shanxi, Shaanxi, Shandong, and parts of southwest China. Sichuan opera (*Chuanju*) is famous for the convention of “face changing” (*bianlian*), in which layers of paper-thin silk mask allow actors to change faces in an instant. While the northern forms tend to be robust and emphasize martial skills and acrobatics, the southern forms are more gentle and elegant. Such local drama traditions were once performed by professional actors in private troupes, though many traditions on the mainland became state supported after 1949. Groups of avocational hobbyists often gather in public parks or other venues, including concert halls, all around China to sing opera arias or perform sections of plays. Yueju troupes comprised of female actors are still active in parts of Zhejiang province.

Stories from traditional opera include themes of heroes and historical battles, court cases, love intrigues, and affairs of the imperial court, all with entertainingly moral messages. Some stories, such as *Peony Pavilion* (*Mudan ting*), are widespread, while others may be of a local nature. Historically, vernacular literature and styles of oral narrative have influenced local operas and vice versa, creating a situation in which a story may exist in several genres.

Drama

Although the convention of painting the faces of major characters is one of the most recognizable features of Chinese drama, in recent decades ethnographers have discovered traditions of local drama in southern China where performers wear carved wooden masks. Many of the masked-opera traditions are known as *Nuo* or *Nuotangxi* (*Nuo* hall opera). In parts of Guizhou province, where *Nuo* traditions are especially strong, *Nuo* performances are an important part of New Year ritual activities. Dozens or hundreds of masks are assembled and worshipped at the beginning of the rituals. Amateur troupes of actors (which may include shamans and men who grow long hair to play women’s roles) enact the plays, accompanied by percussion instruments. A common play concerns Kaishan, a mythical figure who loses his ax in a river and must go to the Dragon King’s palace to retrieve it. Another wooden mask tradition, known as *Dixi* (local, or “earth” opera), is associated with the Anshun area of Guizhou.

Featuring colorful masks and elaborate costumes, the song-and-dance dramas utilize a narrator and present martial themes from the classic fictional work *Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo yanyi*) and similar stories. In ritual dramas once common throughout China, actors enact scenes from the Buddhist story of Mulian, who descends to Hell in order to rescue his suffering mother. Harvest festival dramas in the stories from Tibetan history include stories of the ancient king Srongsam-gampo.

Traditions of puppet drama include shadow puppet drama (*piyingxi*) in cities such as Tangshan in northeast China and cloth hand puppet drama (*budaixi*) in Taiwan. The shadow puppets are intricately cut from specially treated mule hide and manipulated by puppeteers behind a backlit curtain. Laser lights, digital music, and clouds of dry ice often enhance puppet performances in Taiwan today. Puppet stories parallel those in traditional Chinese opera, and some researchers have even suggested that puppet movements have influenced the stiff movements of human opera performers.

Several styles of drama known as “little opera” (*xiaoxi*), some with strong elements of folksong and dance, are performed in both rural and urban areas across China. These traditions, whose practitioners are often part of the local communities, include various forms of “rice-sprouts” (*yang’ge*) dramas (the most famous from Dingxian county in Hebei province); Huangmei opera (*Huangmei xi*) from the border of Hubei and Anhui provinces; “Hunan flower-drum” opera (Hunan *huagu xi*); “flowery-lantern” dramas (*huadeng xi*) found all over southern China; “flower song” dramas (*huae’er xi*) among Hui and other ethnic groups in northwest China; and certain ethnic dramatic traditions (some quite recent) such as Yi and Dong drama (*Yiju* and *Dongju*, respectively) in the southwest. Performances are held at appropriate times during the agricultural cycle, many associated with Spring Festival and planting, harvest, or mid-summer celebrations (such as the Yi nationality Torch Festival).

Sports and Games

Traditional sports differ across region and nationality. The rough-and-tumble “manly arts” of the northern steppe appear at events like the Nadam Fair of the Mongols and include wrestling, archery, and games on horseback. One popular contest among the Zhuang and Dong in the Guizhou/Guangxi borderlands involves two huge teams of area youths who chase each other back and forth in muddy rice fields, attempting to gain control of a small iron ring that is fired high into the air with a small black powder signal cannon. Similar in spirit are the contests held among several ethnic groups in northwest China in which participants on horseback struggle for the possession of a goat carcass while galloping full speed across the steppe. Long wooden “dragon boats” rowed by teams of men (and in recent years women) are a high point in *Duanwu* festivals held in late spring among the Han in southern China. The Dai of Yunnan have similar dragon boat contests during the annual “Water-Splashing” festival, in which crowds of people drench one another with pans of water, along with huge displays of hand-made fireworks, folk dancing, singing, and games of skill for children.

In recent years, competitions featuring traditional ethnic minority sports have been held in all of the ethnic autonomous regions. In some cases traditional folk activities have been modified as sports. One example from Guangxi

involves teams of young men and women throwing embroidered balls with cloth tails (*xiuqiu*) back and forth through a hoop at the top of a long pole. This sport is a direct adaptation of a traditional courting game of the Zhuang and related groups, in which young people sang antiphonal songs and young women tossed the handmade balls to prospective lovers.

Folk games, again differing by region and ethnic group, include children's games, contests, festival entertainments, song-and-dance plays and routines, knowledge games, word games and songs that play on features of language, small animal tricks, cards, and board games. Lantern parades and fireworks are part of the Spring Festival in Han areas. Wooden swings were once popular in many parts of China, especially with young women. Swings are still part of festival events in some Yi communities in the southwest and ethnic Korean communities in the northeast.

Popular children's games of the Han people include Eagle Catches the Chicks (*laoying zhua xiaoji*). To play, an "eagle" attempts to catch the "chicks" hiding in a line behind a vigorously protective "hen." Another common activity involves kicking small bundles of old coins trimmed with feathers (*tijianzi*) that are kept in the air as long as possible by multiple kicks, sometimes between more than one player. Other games include the popular girl's activity of dancing between long strings of rubber bands (*tiaopiji'er*) and grabbing games involving stones (*zhuashizi*) or painted pig knuckle bones (*chuagu*), similar to the Western game of jacks.

Historical records from very early times note contests between various creatures at festivals and private gatherings. In recent decades, these have included struggles between water buffalo, rams, goats, chickens, ducks, birds, dogs, and ants, especially in certain areas in south and southwest China. Crickets have long been favorite pets all over China, and special breeds are used in fighting contests.

Paper playing cards seem to have been invented in China during the Song Dynasty (960–1279 CE), and long and thin cards are still found in some areas. All over the country, Western and Chinese card games as well as traditional table games such as mahjong and *xiangqi* (go) are extremely popular pastimes.

Arts, Crafts, and Architecture

The material folk arts of China appear in a wide variety of mediums and styles according to geography and culture. Wood, bamboo, clay, paper, lacquer, indigo, cotton, silk, hemp, rattan, birchbark, tree leaves, jade, marble, turquoise, coral, natural fruit, seeds, butter, wheat dough, rice flour, sugar, felt, leather, fur, hair, horn, antler, teeth, fish skin, ivory, beads, foil, plastic, and other materials have all been mediums for artistic expression in the folk world. Items include the architecture of homes, shrines, temples, bridges, and community buildings; seasonal and event-specific clothing and accessories; tools for agriculture, hunting, gathering, and herding; weapons such as swords, crossbows, muzzle-loading muskets, and powder horns; brush-writing implements; jewelry; festival

decorations and costumes; objects used in life cycle rituals (births and child protection rites, courting and wedding rituals, important birthdays, and funerals); charms and good luck tokens; musical instruments and implements used by storytellers; accoutrements of ritual specialists and personal worship; boats, carts, and sleds; eating utensils and household furnishings; tea drinking implements; smoking tools; alcohol stills; personal hygiene items; sewing and weaving tools; tattooing equipment (in southwest China); and many others.

The styles of vernacular architecture are easy to see on train or bus rides through rural China. They range from round communal compounds (*tulou*) holding 300–500 people in Hakka areas of the Fujian-Guangdong border areas to wooden homes of the Naxi nationality in Lijiang, Yunnan, and the elaborate wooden post-and-lintel architecture of the Chenyang Wind and Rain Bridge and drum towers in the Dong ethnic region of Sanjiang in northern Guangxi. There are hewn granite homes in the Bouyei nationality regions of Guizhou and the Bai of Dali, Yunnan. Rammed-earth and adobe-walled towns and courtyards featuring heated brick beds (*kang*) are found across northern China.

Skillfully excavated cave homes appear in parts of the northwest. Adobe compounds with low roofs pitching down into central courtyards are found in the oases of Gansu and other northwest desert areas, while white-washed brick cottages with black tile roofs line some canals in the lower Yangzi. Felt *ger* (yurts) are still seen on parts of the northern grasslands, though birchbark wigwams once used in the northeast forests would be difficult to find. Expansive timber and adobe Tibetan homes with peaked roofs in the Shangrila region of northwest Yunnan contrast with flat-roofed Tibetan homes in other areas. Qiang nationality dwellings and watchtowers in the Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture of Sichuan province are skillfully built of irregular broken rock and timbers. Bamboo and wooden stilt houses of the Dai and Jino nationalities are common in rural areas of the Xishuangbanna region of southern Yunnan. Within the homes of the matriarchal Moso people around Lake Lugu on the Yunnan-Sichuan border, dwelling and eating areas are designated according to age and gender.

Stylized patterns, decorations, and symbols, sometimes with almost universal meaning in China and other parts of East Asia, manifest themselves in many regions and mediums. Examples are images of cranes, bamboo, evergreens, lotuses, peaches, plum blossoms, chrysanthemums, peonies, pear wood, dragons, phoenixes, mythical beasts, and pairs of ducks, fish, fowl, butterflies, and the Chinese characters for “double-happiness” or “long life”—all with auspicious meanings related to wealth, status, health, harmony, longevity, offspring, and marital bliss. In other cases, items are regional or local in occurrence. Weaving and embroidery patterns from Miao, Zhuang, Bai, and other ethnic minority groups include many of the images just mentioned as well as mountains, rivers, local water plants, and algae.

Paper Cutting

China invented paper by 105 CE, and paper cuts have been traced to as early as 207 CE in northern China. Many paper arts are still current, including elaborate grave offerings burned at funerals and a wide variety of good luck charms and decorative items. Mulberry bark, rice straw, wood, or rags are among the materials used to make paper. The art of paper cutting is still practiced in many areas and has a commercial market, especially for weddings and Chinese New Year. Thin sheets of paper, colored on one side, are stacked in a specially prepared wooden box frame, the bottom tempered with a mixture of fat, charcoal, and beeswax. The auspicious color red is very traditional, though many other colors or mixtures of colors are used. In some styles, ten to fifty sheets of paper are cut at one time, using sharp knives driven down through the paper. Other styles employ large-handled, fine-bladed Chinese scissors. Designs may be cut free-hand or transferred to the paper by the use of patterns outlined in smoke or chalk. Themes include good luck items such as peaches, pairs of fish or ducks, scenes from Chinese opera, or daily life. Once cut, paper cuts can be placed on walls or windows or mounted on white paper.

All over China carved woodblocks were used to print images of protector gods and spirits, magic tokens, and good luck pictures displayed at the New Year (*nianhua*). Flourishing by the Song Dynasty, pictures were produced on various grades of paper and sometimes in several colors applied with a series of different blocks. In rural areas, doors are often guarded by colorful paper posters of ancient generals known as “door gods” (*menshen*) who are pasted on the outside doors to protect the families from unlucky forces.

Challenges of the Modern World

The effects of modernization on Chinese folk traditions on the mainland and on Taiwan have taken somewhat different tracks, though there are similarities. While Taiwan was spared the political movements that wracked the mainland periodically from 1949 to the late 1970s, the effects of mass culture and modernization were already being felt in the early 1970s as audiences and practitioners were drawn from traditional entertainments and mediums of expression by increased urbanization, mechanization, and competition from electronic media. In some instances, however, past has melded with present, as exemplified by Taiwan puppet operas featuring laser lights and dry ice, and shortened and revised Beijing opera performances (many featuring the lively Monkey King) in tourist venues in Beijing.

On both the mainland and Taiwan, tourism has appropriated, adapted, reworked, revived, recycled, recreated, and invented folk traditions to draw in audiences comprised largely of non-locals. The commodification of ethnicity has been especially pronounced in ethnic minority venues. Examples include dances and songs performed by Ami people at Taroko Gorge in Taiwan, Mongol riding

and wrestling exhibitions in Inner Mongolia, folksinging, traditional architecture, and marriage reenactments among the Miao, Zhuang, and Dong peoples in Guizhou and Guangxi. Full-scale promotions of ethnic culture are pervasive in Yunnan, a province in southwest China where ethnic tourism has become a major source of local and regional income. Aspects of Bai, Naxi, Dai, Yi, and Tibetan performance, foodways, folk costume, music, and architecture are available through short tours, home visits, and overnight stays. Recently, tourist growth in Yunnan and neighboring areas has been promoted as part of an “opening of the West” development project and aided by the infrastructure of new road systems, tourist buses, convenient lodgings, and digital technology.

An outstanding example of ethnic tourism is the song-and-dance extravaganzas and laser light shows in the Stone Forest, south of Kunming, Yunnan, where versions of the story of the Sani people’s folk heroine Ashima are presented alongside reenactments of rituals by actors dressed as priest-shamans called *bimo*. Shops are filled with ethnic costumes (sometimes of other ethnic groups), batik wall-hangings, jewelry, carvings, and other folk arts. The Ten-Month Solar Calendar Park in Chuxiong, Yunnan, is a large-scale park artistically introducing aspects of myth, legend, song, dance, and material culture of Yi groups in Yunnan. Statues representing folk figures such as the song goddess Liu Sanjie (Third Sister Liu) in Liuzhou, Guangxi, and the Yi hero Zhige Alu in Ninglang, Yunnan, are sometimes encountered in small cities throughout the ethnic minority areas of China. Variety shows presented to huge audiences on national television often feature increasingly elaborate and abstracted performances of ethnic minority folksongs, folk dances, and rituals to audiences with little or no understanding of the particular local cultures represented.

While tourism provides new and sometimes radically altered contexts, contents, and mediums of folk expression, audiences and performers in more traditional situations are in many instances fading. In some areas of southwest China, for instance, the number of folksingers under the age of thirty has fallen dramatically in the last two decades. Audiences are also shrinking for the daily storytelling sessions in story houses and local opera houses, though in some places new venues have grown in or near senior citizen complexes. Like folk traditions throughout time, the situation is dynamic, and while some forms may disappear without practitioners and audiences, new or modified forms may emerge over time—one example being the widespread growth of the “rice-sprouts (*yang’ge*) street dancing and drama among middle-aged women and men throughout the 1990s in many urban areas in northern China. Some folk forms may also receive new attention as modern audiences search their collective past for their roots in Chinese culture.

Numerous national, provincial, and local museums all over the country preserve and interpret folk culture. These include the huge Ethnic Palace Museum (*Minzu gong*) in Beijing; the Suzhou Folk Culture Museum (*Suzhou minsu*

bowuguan) in Suzhou, Jiangsu province; the Yunnan Ethnic Minorities Museum (*Yunnan minzu bowuguan*) and Ethnic Minority Village park (*Minzu cun*) in Kunming; Museum of the Liangshan Yi's Slave Society (*Liangshan Yizu nuli shehui bowuguan*) in Xichang, Sichuan; a folklore museum of Shanxi folk culture in the huge late-Qing Dynasty residential architectural complex known as "Qiao Family Castle" (*Qiaojia dayuan*) in Taiyuan; the County Museum (*Xian bowuguan*) in the ancient Silk Road town of Dunhuang, Gansu province; the Inner Mongolian Historical Museum (*Nei Menggu lishi bowuguan*) in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia; and the Tianjin Folk Museum (*Tianjin minsu bowuguan*), built on the site of an ancient temple to the sea goddess, Mazu, in Hebei province.

Studies of Chinese Folklore

Massive numbers of books, articles, and journals devoted to folklore studies printed at national and local levels have appeared in China since 1949, with the number of publications increasing every year since the 1980s. The journal *Studies of Ethnic Literature* (*Minzu wenxue yanjiu*), published by the ethnic literature division of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, is particularly noteworthy for studies of folk literature. Younger scholars who innovatively incorporate Chinese and Western folklore theory into their research include the student of the Mongol epic Chao Gejin (Chogjin) and Yi (Nuosu) epic scholar Bamo Qubumo. Works by foreign scholars and missionaries on local folk customs began to appear in the nineteenth century. In the 1950s and 1960s, David Crockett Graham and Wolfram Eberhard edited collections of Chinese folktales collected in the 1940s from local regions in China. After 1949, access to mainland China was severely limited, and many folklorists and anthropologists could work only in peripheral Chinese culture areas.

By the late 1980s, however, books and articles by European, Japanese, American, and Korean scholars increased as China began to reopen. Among recent works in English are studies of Yangzi delta folksongs by Antoinette Schimmelpenninck, northwest minority stories and songs collected by Kevin Stuart and local collaborators, Naxi folk music by Helen Rees, and Yangzhou and Suzhou professional storytelling by Vibeke Bordahl and Mark Bender, respectively. More recent anthropological studies include those on folk cultures of the Yi (Nuosu) in Sichuan by Steve Harrell, Bamo Qubumo, and Ma Erzi; Yi (Lolopo) in central Yunnan by Eric Mueggler; and Miao in southeast Guizhou by Louisa Schein. Important English-language journals for the study of Chinese folklore include *Asian Folklore Studies* (published in *Najoya*, Japan), *Asian Music: Journal for the Society of Asian Music*, *CHIME* (journal of the European Foundation for Chinese Music Research), *Chinoperl Papers*, and *Oral Tradition* from the Center for Studies in Oral Tradition at the University of Missouri, Columbia.

Mark Bender

See Also Ethnic Folklore; Japanese Folklore.

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Choreometrics

A method for describing and rating dance and everyday movements in general qualitative terms, with the aim, according to Alan Lomax, of “recording and noting regularities and contrasts in movement patterns which are sufficiently frequent and

gross to produce units universally applicable in cross-cultural studies.” The basic ideas behind this method are that movement style in dance is a crystallization of the most frequent and crucial patterns of everyday activity and that the distribution of dance styles in the world corresponds closely to the distribution of cultures. Thus, in this method, dance is considered only as a representation and reinforcement of cultural patterns.

Choreometrics is an offspring of the Cantometrics Project, which was created in the 1960s by ethnomusicologist Alan Lomax. He and dance researchers Irmgard Bartiniéff and Forrestine Paulay developed a rating system, based on a revised version of Rudolf Laban’s effort-shape scheme, that describes the characteristic stances and modes of using energy that underlie social interaction, work, and other types of activity in a particular culture. Film sequences collected from all over the world, showing people in dance and at work, have been, for practical reasons, the main empirical source. On a special coding sheet, a number of parameters are rated and measured, such as the most active body parts, number of parts used, shape of transition, shape of main activity, energy of transition, energy of main activity, degree of variation, and spread of flow through the body.

The key concepts underlying the Choreometrics Project are style, dance type, culture type, global units, and universal and cross-cultural attributes. Taken together, they indicate both the kind and level of goals and the theoretical and methodological problems inherent in the study of dance. Historically, the ideas behind the project are closely related to the German *Kulturkreis* school in ethnology and the diffusionist school in folklore (the historic-geographic or Finnish School), which emphasize typologies, distribution, and mapping of cultural styles and artifacts. The main problems of the method are the claims for the universal validity of the results, the modeling of culture upon languages (“people belong to movement communities just as they belong to speech communities”), the assumption that cultures are objectively existing bounded entities that can be mapped globally, the idea of a close relation between dance and everyday movements in all cultures, and the assertion that this relationship can be measured on the basis of a limited number of filmed examples.

Owen Ronström

See Also Cantometrics.

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Cinderella

Usually said to have been first written down in the ninth century CE in China, Cinderella may well be the world's number one fairy tale, though this claim is also made of other widespread tale types such as “Red Riding Hood,” “Snow White,” and “Sleeping Beauty.” The story is, then, perhaps more than one-thousand years old and, like all such stories, has undergone many transformations through time, between cultures, and across distances. Despite much speculation, we can never know what the original story of Cinderella was like, but we can be reasonably sure that it involved a heroine from the bottom of the social order undergoing various tests and tribulations in order to win the love of a hero from the opposite end of the economic scale. These are the timeless and seemingly universal themes of many folk hero narratives.

Modern audiences have taken to the story of the put-upon sister forced to sleep in the garret by her three ugly stepsisters and her nasty stepmother. Cinderella is the classic oppressed innocent and victim. However, in the earliest European literary version, called “The Cat Cinderella” and included in Giambattista Basile’s *The Pentamerone* (1634–1636), the heroine is a schemer who meets a just fate. Almost all subsequent versions, though, present Cinderella as the wronged figure who, usually through some recognition device, manages to get her prince.

The most important early publication of Cinderella is that of Charles Perrault in his 1697 *Histoires ou contes du temps passé* (Historical tales from the past), also subtitled *Contes de ma mère l’oie* (Tales of my mother goose), thus beginning the



Prince Charming placing the slipper onto Cinderella's foot as illustrated by Anton Werner in the Grimm brothers' *Aschenputtel*, ca. 1900. (Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

long-standing tradition of nursery rhymes and fairy tales being published under the name of Mother Goose. As with a number of other now-classic fairy tales, Perrault was responsible for a considerable refining of the story and for the detail of the glass slipper as a recognition device. In Perrault's version, Cinderella's actions are determined more by the fairy godmother than by Cinderella herself. Mostly she does as the fairy godmother tells her and wins the prince, rather oddly rewarding her unpleasant sisters with marriage to wealthy aristocrats.

Perrault's genteel telling of the tale (that on which the Disney animated feature of 1950 was based), in which the girl is a rather saccharine young innocent, stands in sharp contrast to that of the Grimms, titled "Ashenputtelle" or "Ash Girl." In this story, published in 1812, the heroine is much more self-motivated and in control, and it ends with the sisters getting their proper punishment. Birds pluck out their eyes as they make their way to and from Cinderella's wedding. "Thus for their malice and treachery they were punished with blindness for the rest of their lives," ends the Grimms' version, with more than a hint of vengeful sanctimony. The Grimms also included a number of other Cinderella-type tales in their collection, including "Allerleirauh," a "Cap o' Rushes" version, and a "One-eye, Two-eyes, Three-eyes" tale.

The longevity and wide distribution of the Cinderella story and the consistency of many of its motifs from one version to another, notably that of the shoe as a recognition device, has made it one of the most studied of all fairy tales. There is an extensive literature on Cinderella that stretches from the numerous literary rewrites and anthologies, through the mythological speculations of nineteenth-century anthropologists and folklorists, and deep into recent Freudian and Jungian psychology. Folklorists have also devoted considerable time and effort to analyzing and understanding what is perhaps the world's best-known folktale.

In a collection entitled *Cinderella: A Casebook*, American folklorist Alan Dundes presents a variety of folkloric approaches to the story of Cinderella, including essays on Russian, Chinese, English, Greek, Indian, and French versions of the Cinderella tale and its distribution in Europe, Africa, and parts of Asia. Other selections in this work deal with a Muslim women's ritual reuse of the story and with spiritual, Jungian, and Freudian interpretations of the story. Further essays cover the actual folkloric rendition of a Tuscan version of the tale and a consideration of the popularization of the Cinderella story in America. Dundes makes it clear that these are but a sampling of the rich variety and diversity of folkloric Cinderella studies, most of which are beholden to the astonishing work of Marian Roalfe Cox, who published her *Cinderella: Three Hundred and Forty-Five Variants of Cinderella, Catskin, and Cap o' Rushes, Abstracted and Tabulated, with a Discussion of Medieval Analogues and Notes* in 1893. In 1951, the Swedish folklorist Anna Birgitta Rooth published her *Cinderella Cycle*, using about 700 different versions of the tale. These are the foundation works of

folklore scholarship on this heroine, and together with the large number of other works on this one story and with its variations and entries in Aarne and Thompson's *The Types of the Folktale* (1910 and 1961), they constitute a convincing case for the antiquity and the persistence of the Cinderella cycle.

The use of the term *cycle* in connection with Cinderella stories is appropriate and advisable. Scholarship has discovered and delineated at least five distinct subtypes of the Cinderella story. One of these is the basic Cinderella story that will be familiar to most Western readers; another is the group of tales revolving around a figure called "Catskin"; a third involves a "Cap o' Rushes"; and a fourth "One-eyes, Two-eyes, and Three-eyes." In a fifth subtype, the Cinderella role is taken by a male, as in the Native American story of Amala and in some Hungarian stories. Other versions of Cinderella include the Norwegian "Katie Woodencloak," the Georgian "Conkiajgharuna," or "The Little Rag Girl," the Serbian "Pepelyouga," and the Italian "Rosina," to name only a few. Some of these versions combine Cinderella with motifs from other stories.

Graham Seal

See Also Children's Folk Heroes; Children's Folklore; Fairy Tale Heroes; Hero/Heroine, Folk.

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Clever Question/Wisdom Question

A type of traditional enigma in which the solution cannot be guessed from the question but lies in specialized cultural knowledge. The clever question is found as a pastime in cultures that emphasize the oral examination in question-and-answer form as a means of socialization.

In many Protestant U.S. communities, the tradition of catechism in religious instruction has given rise to the posing of biblical questions. In strict groups, this instructive pastime often substitutes for other amusements viewed as immoral. Biblical clever questions do not address central questions of faith and doctrine but stretch the wits in a different way, as in the question, “How many names in the Bible begin with an *h*?” Others, although their solutions are still literal, come closer to trick questions (“Who in the Bible speaks and yet goes to neither Heaven nor Hell?—Balaam’s ass”).

In the United States, the clever question has become a profitable means of structuring and encouraging popular participation in mass culture. The manufacturers of baseball cards expanded their market after World War II by covering the backs of the cards with questions about batting averages and World Series scores, thus giving their customers a way to use the cards in interaction and multiplying the number of cards to be collected. A radio station connects with its listeners by offering a prize to the first person who calls in and correctly names, for example, the first drummer of the Beatles. Television quiz shows increase the prestige to be gained in a display of knowledge by carrying it to a national audience, with the added inducement of financial gain. The board game Trivial Pursuit takes the burden off the players’ shoulders by posing the questions for them.

Even the high-culture industry has learned from popular culture’s example. A few years after the Trivial Pursuit fad of the early 1980s, literary scholar E. D.

Hirsch declared the “culturally literate” to be those who could successfully identify a series of quotations, literary figures, scientific theories, and other things “that literate Americans know.” Hirsch’s proposed list of 5,000 items constituting the Western cultural lexicon provoked a more anxious form of trivial pursuit among those seeking to be literate and created a miniature publishing boom in rival lists and dictionaries.

The Christian catechism and university entrance exams demand the display of knowledge encapsulated in succinct answers to specific questions as the price of admission to a group. In the same way, the clever question can be a means of gaining entry or prestige. The lasting effects of adolescent male ludic competitions provide the comic subject for Barry Levinson’s film *Diner*, in which a young man subjects his fiancée to an excruciating football trivia quiz before he consents to marry her.

The popularity of the clever question in the contemporary United States also relates to a lingering utilitarian contempt for most forms of amusement as “wasted time”—practices such as Trivial Pursuit and crossword puzzles can be defended as educational. Finally, games of clever questions exemplify an important assumption in the socialization of Americans: Knowledge, construed as a collection of discrete facts, leads to advancement and financial reward. The ethos of competitive accumulation (of both facts and goods) is played out in miniature in boys’ trading of baseball cards and in the nightly broadcast of the television show *Jeopardy*.

Dorothy Noyes

See Also Enigma, Folk.

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Communal Origins Theory

The assumption that an aspect of culture was invented by a social group as a whole, rather than by an outstanding individual. This hypothesis has its roots in eighteenth-century romantic mystical philosophy, which attributed benevolent qualities to “savages,” and in nineteenth-century Romantic Nationalism and associated ideologies that glorified ethnic and national groups (often labeled *races*). The general cultural atmosphere of the romantic period promoted debates about the inevitability of historical processes and the creative powers of the folk.

Friedrich Karl Savigny—one of the founders of the historical school and mentor to Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm—argued that “each historical process does not spring from conscious individual intention but rather carries in itself its own organic life, which develops through the effect of a force inaccessible to reason.” Reflecting this mystical postulate, Jacob Grimm stated that “every epos must compose itself.” Taken along with the conviction that “the folk creates,” the two basic building blocks of the communal origins theory were put together.

By combining these two beliefs about creativity as an inevitable historical process and the folk as an active entity, the view that certain artistic cultural expressions arose through inevitable accident at the hands of unsophisticated social groups was formulated.

The most explicit expression of this idea is associated with Francis B. Gummere’s explanations of how ballads originated through a singing-dancing throng. Gummere asserted that in the “primitive” stage of the development of poetry and in certain surviving cases, groups of illiterate individuals, without the ability to conceive of the future or to relate their experiences either to the past or to the experiences of other groups, gathered in festive settings, and through singing, accurate rhythm keeping, and dancing, these individuals expressed sentiments about local events that held immediate appeal and reflected a common interest. This, according to Gummere, was the cultural foundation of poetry: “In point of poetic process here is the social as opposed to the individual element. This festal throng and its rude choral verse are just as much a fact, apart from question of value, as a young man in the library and his poem.”

The exact process by which such a creative exercise actually works has never been observed. Half a century after the introduction of Gummere’s theory, ballad scholars such as D. K. Wilgus argued that “no adequate summary of Gummere’s theory of communal origins has ever been made, possibly because no critic seems to have understood the peculiar union of faith and method by which Gummere convinced a generation of literary scholars that the ballad must be studied as a survival of primitive poetry.” Today, the communal creation theory has been largely discredited. Arguing for a process of “communal *re-creation*” of narrative poems composed by individual authors constitutes a more plausible theory of ballad origins.

Hasan El-Shamy

See Also Ballad; Bard; Evolutionary Theory; Folksong, Narrative.

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Communitas

A concept of symbolic anthropology, meaning an anti-structural fellowship typical of ritual contexts. The term is from the Latin word meaning community. *Communitas* is a social relationship that differs from the normal social and ideological order of things (i.e., the ordinary structure of the community).

The term was introduced by Victor W. Turner (1920–1983), one of the most prominent figures in the anthropological study of religion and symbolic analysis of ritual. In developing his own theory and terminology of symbolic anthropology for the study of religious symbols and ritual contexts, Turner singled out models that were observable in most ritual contexts. His labels for these common sequences in the ritual process were *communitas* and liminality. These concepts were very closely interrelated and represented further developments of Arnold van Gennep's ideas on liminal phases. In Turner's opinion, *communitas* represented one of the two major models for human interrelatedness, juxtaposed and alternating between the structured and hierarchical systems and the unstructured community emerging within liminal periods.

The concept of "structure" coincides with that of "social structure." It is suggested that *communitas* and "anti-structure" characterize the liminal stage within a ritual process, where the juridical and political character of structure is challenged; *communitas*, by contrast, is a description for the community liminality. The distinction between the structure and status system and the liminal and *communitas* as their counterparts stresses not only their difference but also their complementary nature in the understanding of social and ritual life within a society.

Thus, the existence of this polarity between structure and anti-structure is not limited to ritual contexts only but is also seen to characterize the whole human community. Social life is analyzed as a kind of dialectical process: All human interactions are perceived as consisting of two opposite and alternating forms, the stratified society and the egalitarian, closely knit liminal fellowship—*communitas*. According to Turner, every individual and community has to face alternating exposures to either structure or *communitas*. Transitions within the ritual procedures or within the individual's life history govern one's life experiences in any society.

Communitas can be characterized as a social form of liminality. *Communitas* is a relationship between those individuals who are not segmented according to roles and status but who confront one another in an unstructured way. Although *communitas* is supposed to be anti-structural by its nature, it is not possible to

maintain the spontaneity and immediacy of *communitas* for very long. *Communitas* then produces its own structure in which free relationships between individuals become converted into norm-governed relationships between social personae. The relationships or structure that *communitas* produces can be distinguished into three categories: (1) existential or spontaneous *communitas*; (2) normative *communitas*, in which, under the influence of time, the need to mobilize and organize resources, and the necessity for social control among members of the group in pursuance of these goals, the existing *communitas* is reorganized into a better social system; and (3) ideological *communitas*, which is a label one can apply to a variety of utopian models of societies based on *communitas*.

Juha Pentikäinen

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Community-Based Research

A movement that connects colleges and universities with community groups in order to undertake collaborative, applied research projects. The Community Based Research (CBR) movement has been gaining recognition over the past twenty years for its community-centered philosophy that revolves around an ideal of equitable partnership. It overlaps in some aspects with the field of service-learning, placing a particular emphasis on mutually beneficial learning practices and shared power. A growing literature has helped CBR gain considerable footing; moreover, the methodologies for undertaking community-engaged projects have evolved through networks of scholars and practitioners (i.e., the National CBR Networking Initiative, The Loka Institute, Campus Compact, etc.). In CBR, ideally, community members have an equal amount of decision-making power as those in the campus community, and all parties understand their collaborative efforts to be about transformative social change (<http://www.cbrnet.org>).

Some of the professional standards of CBR, as promoted in materials sponsored by formalized associations, peer-reviewed journals, and networking organizations include the following principles and protocols: notions of mutual engagement and

reciprocity as well as sharing in design creation, data gathering, researching methods, and dissemination processes through which to apply the knowledge gained. To ensure such partnerships may unfold in effective ways, those involved in CBR projects foreground the importance of trust and open communication throughout the process of collaborating—paying explicit attention to decision-making structures, constraints, and historical inequalities that may have limited, or may continue to inhibit, some members' full participation in society. The intent is to address particular objectives, take concrete actions, and accomplish goals that affect the quality of life of those involved and at the same time provide valuable student learning.

Stakeholders involved may be everyday residents, grassroots activists, community-based organizations, workers in voluntary associations, nongovernmental organizations, social workers in mid-range service-providing institutions, experts in various fields, governmental agencies, and institutions of higher education. Given the array of possible partners, it is a challenge to ensure that no one party monopolizes knowledge while empowering all stakeholders to build capacity for creative problem solving.

Folklore has a history of doing “community-based” study and, arguably, does so with a nuanced understanding of the core principles and protocols noted previously. Applied folklorists' and public sector folklorists' use of fieldwork and ethnography are two cases in point. Many folklorists, moreover, are engaged in CBR-type projects, partnerships, and relationships that by nature are creative, reciprocal, community-centered, designed to share knowledge equitably, and grounded in community-driven research. Among the many colleges and universities, other institutions, and specific projects exemplifying this kind of work, many find folklorists assisting with CBR projects: the University of Pennsylvania, Cabrini College, Dickinson College, Princeton University, the Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the Institute for Community Research, and the Institute for Cultural Partnerships are but a few such endeavors. Attempts at any comprehensive listing prove moot, for folklorists have long participated in these sorts of partnerships. While folklore has not been at the center of the CBR movement, the protocols, practices, and underlying principles are very much aligned with folkloristics, as the life work of Myles Horton, Gerald David, Bernice Johnson Reagon, Archie Green, and many others demonstrates.

Folklorists know well the preparation and effort it takes to develop quality interactions within various community contexts; it takes more than time, good intentions, and desire to begin to grasp “emic” perspectives, to learn to appreciate fully the gifts of the “tradition bearers”—their “mother wit,” the local culture, the contours of indigenous knowledge. Folkloristics, moreover, prides itself on the arts of deep listening, careful documentation of fieldwork, and the insights

gleaned through conversational interviewing. Shared power can be evidenced in many venues in which folklorists share the literal and proverbial stage, live out the values of reciprocity, and would not think to intervene when the situation calls for working with—and alongside—other people. As a first step, even before entering into such a project, folklorists, especially those with a progressive approach, question the very assumptions about “place” that can emerge out of problematic definitions of who is “the community.”

Unsurprisingly, folklorists may find most concerning the gap that remains between the ideals of CBR and the realities that often typify actual training in how to implement these ideals. Since many practitioners of CBR are not embedded in folkloristics (nor community organizing nor activism, for that matter), sufficient orientation for both faculty and students seems to be lacking on many campuses. What expertise do those who prepare students have? How comprehensively do they prepare students for the on-the-ground practices, bottom-up approaches, and foundational skills they need in order to do effective social action and, even more critically, to carry out such work respectfully, as articulated in the core practices of CBR?

Many folklorists have been engaged in projects that fall within the category of CBR even if not explicitly termed as such. Their experiences illuminate the range of undertakings that may get designated as Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR), Participatory Action Research (PAR), Community Engaged Scholarship (CES), and so on, and thus point up the politics and limitations such labeling entails. Creative partnerships often emerge ad hoc, at the grassroots, and cross sectors, academic disciplines, and networks. As CBR becomes increasingly institutionalized across campuses, important questions arise: What is at stake when institutions of higher education craft ever more formalized partnership agreements? Or when the partnerships established are made primarily with mid-range institutions providing services to selected populations, or when some aspects of community life receive more focus than others? Several underlying issues remain: just who is “the community”—the “poor,” the “underserved,” the “folk”—with whom college campuses claim they are sustaining partnerships? For practical, structural, and political reasons, and given liability concerns, mid-range institutions will tend to be privileged for campus-community partnerships, while more vernacular and grassroots groups will continue to be marginalized despite the protocol and practices CBR networks avow. Because the tradition of folklore studies has worked with people who are not enfranchised, the methodologies of progressive, activist approaches, especially the attention to reflexivity, can do much to inform the practices of CBR.

Nancy L. Watterson

See Also Activism; Applied Folklore/Folkloristics; Public Sector Folklore.

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Comparative Mythology

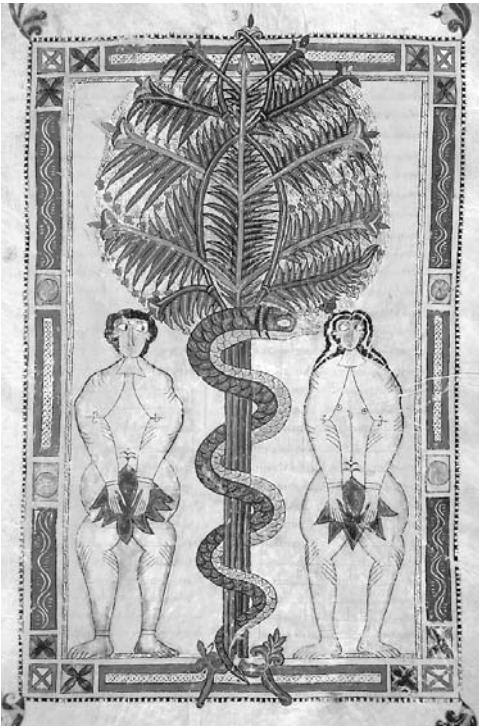
Broadly construed, any study of mythology that attempts to reach conclusions through cross-cultural investigation; in a narrower usage, a tradition of philologically based comparative investigation of mythologies within the Indo-European language family. The precise delimitation, history, and classification of this language family has been a matter of some controversy. In his recent summary, *Comparative Mythology*, Jaan Puhvel delineates the following language groups as underlain by the Indo-European protolanguage: Indic, Iranian, Tocharian, Anatolian, Armenian, Greek, Italic, Celtic, Germanic, Baltic, and Slavic. One of the prime motives behind the study of Indo-European mythology has been the assumption that Indo-European civilization formed the essential source of Western civilization; the research of certain recent scholars, notably Martin Bernal, suggests the necessity of reexamining this assumption in light of evidence supporting a greater Afro-Asiatic influence. Traditions of comparative study also have developed within other, non-Indo-European language families (e.g., the Malayo-Polynesian family); these have sometimes incorporated methods from the Indo-European model. Because it is historically and methodologically so important, the distinction

between the “narrower” and “broader” conceptions of comparative mythology will be used throughout the present discussion.

Comparative mythology in the narrower sense was set in motion in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, less by considerations specific to mythology than by discoveries in the field of comparative philology. Such scholars as William Jones, Franz Bopp, and Jacob Grimm demonstrated parallels between certain languages of Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, which in turn led to the reconstruction of Proto-Indo-European as a parent language. These philological researches lent major impetus to the detailed investigation and historical reconstruction of the relationships between the mythologies of the various Indo-European societies. Attempts to reconstruct the history and content of pantheons proved a particularly compelling pursuit, one that was frequently accompanied by nationalistic concerns.

Such historical reconstructions of mythologies via philology reached a crescendo under the intellectual leadership of Friedrich Max Müller, a scholar schooled in German comparative philology but working at Oxford amid the emerging social evolutionism of middle and late nineteenth-century England. Müller’s comparativism rested on a partially secularized variant of the biblical ethnography that had, in previous centuries, provided a means of accounting for cultural parallels noted among widely dispersed peoples. In biblical ethnography, such parallels were held to be remnants of the degenerated original revelation of Eden; in Müller’s version, they were remnants of an original period of natural poetic sensibility and speech, which had achieved an archaic greatness in India. Though many of Müller’s efforts were devoted to the mythicoreligious works of India and to tracing connections to other Indo-European societies, his works sometimes also suggested that one might expect to be able to follow out such historical interconnections through the entire world.

The attempt to explain the occurrence of mythological parallels as matters of historical interrelationship became, through the course of the nineteenth century, increasingly polarized against the methods of evolutionary anthropology, which sought to explain such parallels as independent invention; this in turn would confirm the thesis of unilinear evolution. E. B. Tylor, the leading evolutionist, thought that mythology offered evidence of the erroneous form of reasoning that defined the first evolutionary stage; he juxtaposed the mythologies of numerous societies in order to demonstrate the universal character of human thought at this stage. Logically, historical-diffusionist principles and evolutionary principles are incompatible; they provide competing explanations of the occurrence of ethnographic parallels. It is one of the ironies of Müller that, committed as he was to historical-philological reconstruction, he also put forward theories about the origin of mythology that could easily be read as asserting universal psychic processes—processes lying quite beyond anything specific to the Indo-European tradition.



Illuminated manuscript depicting Adam and Eve and Original Sin, published in 776 CE by Beatus of Liebana. (The Art Archive/Corbis)

The most famous of the more generic aspects of Müller's theories of myth was the "solar" hypothesis—essentially, the claim that mythology was produced as a spontaneous poetic reaction to observed celestial phenomena; the thesis was enthusiastically embraced by many followers. The solar hypothesis was accompanied by a postulated "disease of language," processes of inevitable change in language, including a contraction in the range of meanings of particular terms. Such changes rendered the original poetic utterances unintelligible, if not bizarre, for later generations, who designated such utterances as "mythology." The solar and the disease hypotheses were illustrated by Müller largely through Indo-European material, but many of his followers, swept up in the solar hypothesis, were much more interested in a programmatic theory of myth interpretation than in working out specifically Indo-European issues. And methodological distinctions that are clear in the abstract are often muddy in practice. From Müller onward and even in James Frazer's world-spanning myth study, *The Golden Bough*, it is often simply unclear whether, at any given moment, the comparative dimension rests on a universal human psychology or a postulated cultural-historical interrelationship.

Comparative mythology of the narrower kind underwent a change—in certain respects, a decline—toward the end of the nineteenth century. Several reasons can be cited. The methods of Müller and his followers had many shortcomings, most notably a tendency to rest great claims on small bits of evidence—in some

cases, a postulated cognate relation between words or even single syllables. The vast sweep of world languages characteristic of Müller and his followers conveyed the impression of enormous linguistic erudition. But their work was frequently carried out on the level of words and syllables, and much of it required little more than patience and a set of dictionaries. The smallness of the data was mirrored, inversely, by the extravagance of the speculation. It was largely the looseness and ad hoc nature of the methods that Andrew Lang, gadfly of the solar mythology movement, attacked, once even parodying such methods by using them to prove that Müller was himself a solar myth. Increasing data and types of data rendered some of the original postulated connections untenable.

Finally, as has been suggested, much of the swirl surrounding Müller had been stimulated by those aspects of his theories that were least intimately bound up with Indo-European mythology specifically. So the seeming contraction of interest in comparative mythology in the narrower sense at the end of the nineteenth century perhaps marked not so much a decline in Indo-European mythology as a decline in certain extravagant theories, such as the solar hypothesis and the disease of language, on whose coattails Indo-European mythology had ridden into an unusually prominent place in scholarly and popular consciousness. Comparative mythology of the narrower type, following the decline of Müller's school, tended to become the specialized province of disciplines concerned directly with Indo-European languages, such as departments of classical languages and literatures, and it was supported by such fields as ancient history and archaeology.

The most influential theories of myth in the twentieth century have not been constrained by an Indo-European border but have instead been comparative in the broader sense—seeking to isolate underlying commonalities in myths of different cultures, often with little interest in historical interrelationships. Among these one may count the “myth-ritual” school, the Freudian and Jungian schools, and the structuralist school of Claude Lévi-Strauss. The myth-ritual school and the Freudian and Jungian schools retained some of the assumptions of nineteenth-century evolutionism, especially the so-called comparative method. This method, a corollary of unilinear evolution, consisted of the assumption that one could expect to find correlations between non-European “primitive” cultures and the culture of the European historical past. The Freudian and Jungian schools also frequently invoked a further parallelism—between the psychic development of the individual and the general cultural evolution of humanity, so that, for example, childhood anxieties would have counterparts in the myths and rituals of “primitive” peoples.

Lévi-Strauss utilized the methods of structural linguistics (especially as developed by Roman Jakobson and Ferdinand de Saussure) to discover and analyze underlying patterns in myths and in their transformations through time and space. Though he dealt with patterns at many levels, Lévi-Strauss's most celebrated and controversial claims had to do with postulated universal patterns, which he

attributed to universal properties of the human mind. Vis-à-vis previous comparativists, Lévi-Strauss was distinguished by his insistence that the successful interpretation of a myth necessitates an understanding of its “structure”: It is not any particular image or scenario but rather the way in which elements of a myth work as an ensemble that makes signification possible. The structures that Lévi-Strauss explored were, for the most part, varieties of binary oppositions arranged as proportions; for example, he claimed that the opposition of “raw” versus “cooked” in myth encoded a universal human distinction between “nature” and “culture.” Lévi-Strauss’s interest in developing formal methods to decode meanings did much to bring about the now assumed interrelationship between comparative mythology and semiotic theory—a development that has remained fruitful even in the aftermath of the structuralist movement.

Each of the schools of myth research mentioned here has its own particular methods and theories, but they all operate on the assumption that myth is uniform enough to allow the scholar to abstract general conclusions from a cross-cultural pool of data. But the twentieth century also has seen some movements in the study of mythology that have carried anti-comparativist tendencies; most significant among these are the “functionalism” of Bronislaw Malinowski and certain interpretations of Boasian “historical particularism.” Neither one of these perspectives totally precludes comparison; yet each, in its own way, affirms the value of detailed analysis of myth in context over the search for recurrent, cross-cultural patterns. Malinowski, in “Myth and Primitive Psychology,” specifically developed his functionalist approach as a counter to the speculative exuberance that was characteristic of Müller.

A significant revitalization, with innovations, of comparative mythology of the narrower type occurred in the mid-twentieth century, stimulated by the prolific writings of Georges Dumézil. Dumézil’s success rested largely on the fact that he was able to devise strategies of comparison that incorporated a functionalist emphasis on myth in sociopolitical context—an orientation that he developed through an acquaintance with the Durkheimian tradition of comparative sociology. What Dumézil compared, among Indo-European mythologies, was not so much lexical items as sets of interrelated sociopolitical institutions. Most persistent was his claim that widely dispersed Indo-European mythologies expressed a common, underlying, tripartite “ideology,” in which society was seen as built around three main activities or “functions”—epitomized in priest (magico-religious/juridical order), warrior, and cultivator. An interesting quirk of Dumézil’s “comparative mythology,” then, was that the real object that was compared from society to society was not necessarily mythology but rather “ideology.” Ideology might be expressed in myth, but it might also be expressed in numerous other possible forms, such as genealogies, class divisions within social structure, or narrative genres other than myth. An example of the last is found in *Archaic Roman Religion*,

in which Dumézil juxtaposed the war and eventual merging of the Romans and the Sabines, as recounted in Livy's history of Rome, with Scandinavian accounts of a war and eventual merging of two tribes of gods, the Æsir and the Vanir. Taking a clue from the fact that the Vanir, like the Sabines, represented the values of fecundity and opulence, Dumézil found a commonality between the Roman and the Scandinavian narratives. In each case, claimed Dumézil, there was a depiction of the completion of the tripartite ideology through the addition of fertility, the third function. In this sense, the Roman and Scandinavian accounts, one "historical" and the other "mythical," reflected a shared Indo-European ideology.

One of the main criticisms of Dumézil is reminiscent of a criticism that had been made of Müller—that the methods of comparison allowed the scholar to incorporate too much, eventually obliterating any border around the Indo-European family. In Müller's approach, this happened because of the smallness of the pieces compared: One could always find a syllable that could be postulated as cognate with some syllable in the next language family. In Dumézil's approach, the same thing happened, but it happened because of the largeness—the abstractness and generality—of the entity compared, that is, the tripartite ideology. For it could reasonably be argued that what was depicted in Dumézil's tripartite ideology was not so much an Indo-European specialty as a set of functional prerequisites for any society. In fact, Dumézil's arguments frequently have been picked up by scholars working in societies without any demonstrable connection with the Indo-European world. Once again, theories originating within the study of Indo-European mythology have had, for some scholars, the effect of breaking down the alleged distinctiveness of Indo-European mythology vis-à-vis other mythologies. Dumézil's methods have occasioned many criticisms, but even the critics have often applauded his fresh insights into the relation of myth and society and his refocusing of interest on Indo-European mythology and/or mythology in general.

The present climate is not particularly favorable to cross-cultural methodologies; emphasis is on the local and the incommensurable, and there is acute skepticism of methodologies that suggest "totalizing" ambitions. Still, there are signs that the present-day skepticism is discovering its own limits and that a conviction is returning regarding the value and even the necessity of a discourse of human commonalities and interrelatedness to complement the discourse of differences. Fueled by developments within maturing fields such as cognitive science, we can expect a resurgence of interest in comparative mythology in both the narrower and broader forms—that is, both bounded by particular, historically related language families and oriented toward human universals. The vastly enlarged pool of ethnographic and textual data now available will permit analyses to be more empirically grounded than was possible in Müller's time, yet our findings may prove to be no less amazing than anything devised in Müller's speculative flights.

Gregory Schremp

See Also Evolutionary Theory; Myth-Ritual Theory; Philological Approach; Structuralism.

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Computer-Mediated Folklore

Folklore generated by the computer-user subculture or, more generally, any folklore communicated through computer networking (electronic messaging). Electronic messaging began in the late 1960s as a brainstorming tool for computer programmers. Today, a giant maze of electronic pathways referred to as “the Network” (or usually, just “the Net”) links computer users around the world via fiber-optic telephone cables, making it possible to send almost instantaneous messages (electronic mail, or e-mail) to a user on the other side of the globe.

An outgrowth of these networks since about 1980 has been a proliferation of topical information-sharing forums in which individual users can take part. Topics range broadly and include academic specialties and subspecialties and also hobbies and special interests. Thus, small, temporary communities defined by special interests provide the context and the occasion (and computer networking provides the medium) for communication that is both like and not like that which folklorists more commonly study. Familiar genres such as contemporary legends and topical jokes are frequently communicated via the Net, along with audience commentary, additional variants, and analysis. The extent to which the medium and its technology influence the content and performance of folklore transmitted via the Net, however, and the exact nature of that influence are topics still being explored.

Although hackers like to distinguish between themselves (experts and aficionados) and mere users (who use the computer as a work tool rather than playing more creatively with the medium), the conventions and the jargon that the hacker subculture has evolved have spread widely among all users, and obvious lack of familiarity with the forms is the mark of the uninitiated (or *newbie*). Folklore actually generated by and for computer-mediated communication has been chronicled in electronic format by the computer-networking community itself since 1975. Expanded and updated on an ongoing basis, versions of *The New Hacker's Dictionary* were published in book form in 1983 and in 1991.

Hacker folklore that already has been widely noticed includes the use of *emoticons* such as the sideways smiling faces (smileys) used to make up for the lack of visual cues to indicate emotional content in hastily constructed prose. For example, the basic smiley :-) is inserted when the writer wants to indicate that what he or she has just written should not be taken too seriously or as an insult. Variations on the basic smiley, however, have proliferated in ways that indicate a premium on humor and creativity rather than on clearer communication. The same figure, moreover, can have multiple interpretations. For instance, the figure 8-) is sometimes said to be a user wearing glasses and sometimes an excited user (i.e., a user with wide eyes). A number of glossaries of smileys are in circulation on the Net, as are a number of files on frequently asked questions (FAQ files). Compilations of folklore such as topical jokes or urban legends are often available as FAQ files posted in order to avoid tedious repetitions.

Rosan Augusta Jordan

See Also Xeroxlore.

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Conduit Theory/Multiconduit Theory

A theory developed by Linda Dégh and Andrew Vázsonyi to explain why folklore genres persist in a limited number of remarkably stable and crystallized conventional forms while in the process of transmission and dissemination. Reproduction

in context results in limitless personal and culture-specific variants. The theory asserts folklore texts do not pass through an orderly, regulated trail from person to person but generate their own, specific chain linkages that carry messages through society. These linkages, named *conduits*, consist of individuals united by similar mind-sets—people who react similarly to similar messages and thereby qualify as senders and receivers of similar messages within given systems of communication. If a message—a folklore text—travels through its proper conduit, it goes unchanged from one person to another; however, if the message, on its course, reaches an inappropriate individual, it will either reach a dead end or survive by undergoing modifications, and thereby, the message deviates from its original trail and lands in another conduit whose members respond to the modified message. The forms of oral transmission are as diverse as people, and the eventualities of affinity between people and folklore are as multifarious. Thus, the legend conduit unites legend fanciers, the joke conduit is made up of a sequence of witty people, and tales progress through the tale conduit shaped by storytellers. Furthermore, within a single genre, type clusters, episodes, minor incidents, motifs, and formulas also constitute their own conduits to be identified as subconduits or microconduits. In transmission, further ramifications of the conduit result in a complex, multiconduit system that is the key to the folklore process.

Observation of multi-conduit systems in natural contexts or reproduced in laboratory experiments can contribute to the understanding of the nature of folklore transmission, as affinities link contents and forms, variants emerge, degeneration and regeneration of texts lead to the “extraordinary stability” observed by Walter Anderson when amassing widespread and multifarious variables of the riddle tale AT 922. Conduit analysis also explains how personal preferences lead to innovation and specialization in the building of regional, ethnic, and personal repertoires of magic tales, ghost stories, saint’s legends, murder ballads, or tall tales.

The conduit theory is based on the realization that participation in the communication of folklore depends on spontaneity, the participant’s freedom to tell or not to tell a story. Transmission of traditional messages in natural contexts is essentially free; arbitrary limitation of this freedom encroaches upon the normal functioning of the conduit.

Studying people’s ability to remember and forget, learn and re-create, psychologists, anthropologists, and folklorists experimented with serial reproduction of prose material. Experiments by Frederick Bartlett, Robert Lowie, Walter Anderson, and others were based on the artificial lining up of volunteers, not tradition bearers. This work showed that denying participants the right of choice leads to the gradual devolution of the text. In the retelling procedure, participants react with psychological defense mechanisms by forgetting or falsely remembering, forcing the message into inadequate conduits. The conduit theory argues for the analysis of the mistakes made by participants in artificial serial reproduction

situations, complementing such findings with independent psychological personality testing.

Linda Dégh

See Also Performance; Transmission.

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Contestation

The struggle amongst a culture consisting of two or more factions competing for dominance within its own society. Contestation is often attributed to class opposition and oppression (Hulsether 1993, 2). Contestation, however, can be found in more than just class systems, such as in contestatory literature or within societies that are communist or classless because there will always be a ruling elite (Rodríguez 2000).

The term *hegemony* is often used synonymously with contestation and is the domination by a seemingly superior culture over an inferior culture (Hulsether

1993). Contestation can be found within American studies through the various segments of African American history. African Americans have been involved in a power struggle of culture since the time of slavery. The struggle of power and culture amongst African American slaves and the elite slave owners emphasizes the cultural domination of one group over another (Hulsether 1993). As slavery ended in America, a black nationality movement arose. One group involved in this idea of nationality, led by Marcus Garvey, wanted a return to Africa, while another group wanted to create a Black Canada. Slavery was outlawed in Canada, and officially Canada was a place where African Americans would be welcomed in large quantities. African Americans, however, who moved to the Canadian provinces found themselves encountering the same type of discrimination that they found in the United States. This discrimination existed generally in less distinct forms than the Jim Crow laws and extreme segregation in the American South (Rhodes 2000).

Women in various cultures around the world, also exhibit this contestation involving a power structure. Mary Hegland researched the power paradox found within Pakistan Shi'a women's roles in the mourning rituals of Imam Hussein. In the Islamic religion, women are taught that they should be covered and veiled. During the mourning rituals, however, women experience a greater sense of independence. The rituals, which occur for a period of two months, are sex segregated. During the ritual period, women are able to travel great distances and associate with others who are generally looked down upon within Muslim society, such as show girls. Through this position, the power still resides in the males of the society. One well-known female Muslim preacher, interviewed by Hegland, is not allowed to marry because her brother enjoys a higher status due to her preaching (Hegland 1998).

Melissa Frazier

See Also Ethnic Folklore.

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Context

The conditions or circumstances, either transitory or lasting, within which a given item of lore (or some other aspect of culture or society) is expressed. From the perspective of the individual (or group) eliciting the expression, each external element perceived at the time it is being produced has motivational value (i.e., it becomes a “stimulus situation”); thus, such perceptions affect the item itself as it is being performed. The conception of stimulus situations, as stated by social psychologists, deals with objects and situations in their contextual relationships; the individual experiences and reacts to social objects, persons, groups, cultural items (e.g., furniture, tools, words, music) in terms of meaningful relations prevailing in the characteristic patterns of these stimulus agents.

In folklore scholarship, awareness of the roles played by such intermediary, contextual forces on a given item (and vice versa) may be seen as resulting from the influence of empirical observation by folklorists. This is due also to the impact of psychological learning theories on the functional approach to culture studies, especially the terms proposed by Bronislaw Malinowski and presented to folklorists by William Bascom. In anthropology, the need for contextual data grew from attempts to comprehend correctly social and cultural phenomena, especially verbal texts, radically different from the anthropologist’s own. The works of Franz Boas in North America and those of the Finnish School in Europe were both criticized for reducing the field of folklore to the study of lifeless texts severed from their normal social and cultural contexts.

Thus, anthropologists and folklorists began to see the need for additional information about the “given” norms and values of the community whose verbal lore was being studied. For example, in their research on the Dahomean tales of West Africa, Melville and Frances Herskovits recognized the need to study Dahomean culture as a whole. Their fieldwork was facilitated by a knowledge of contextual data on patterns of family life, economic structure, educational techniques, aesthetic values, religious concepts and ritual, and political development. Similarly, in studying Clackamas Indian narratives from North America, Melville Jacobs realized the importance of social and cultural forces on the process of narrating; thus, he sought to establish the role of these forces as a prerequisite to understanding the narratives themselves.

Consequently, folklorists began emphasizing the roles of these conditions in the study of the various fields of lore—especially the impact of such factors as economic conditions, religious beliefs, audience, and the time and place of an activity—on traditional expressions. Linda Dégh emphasized the importance of the narrating community in understanding a given narrative; Alan Dundes expanded folklorists’ principal interests to include “text, texture, and context.” Studies emphasizing context, often at the expense of the text, were labeled “contextual”; scholars applying such an approach were designated as “contextualists.”

Another aspect of the contextual approach may be explained in terms of the influence of frames of reference on how individuals perceive the properties of physical, as well as social and cultural, objects within a given set of conditions (context)—for example, with reference to physical perception, what determines judging an item as light or heavy, small or big, and so on. Meanwhile, regarding kinship relations, a narrator may perceive a certain character in a folklore text as a man, a king, a brother to a sister, a brother to a brother, a husband to a wife or woman, and so forth. Each of these perceptions would entail the relevant traditional roles associated with the character (e.g., kindness, rivalry). In a cognitive behavioristic analysis of these roles, Hasan El-Shamy demonstrated that the narrator's judgment with respect to each kinship relationship is a function of the total series of relationships that serve as a frame of reference in the given situation. Such psychological processes, which are responsible for the style or semantics of texts, are typically termed *part-whole* or *frame of reference* perceptual principles and are an aspect of the broader concept of context.

Hasan El-Shamy

See Also Audience.

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Cosmology

The culturally appropriate view of and way to study or contemplate the universe in its creation and present aspect. A people's cosmology includes their cognitive and ideational accounts of how the universe came into being and its physical characteristics. Often, the accounts include a set of moral imperatives as well. The accounts may be in prose or in poetry and usually are highly metaphorical

and full of allusion. In some societies, cosmology may be fully known only to a select and highly trained few. In other societies, any member of the group who expresses an interest will be taught the cosmology. In mainstream U.S. culture, young people often complain of being forced to learn cosmology through attendance at Sunday schools or similar religious training classes.

Cosmologies usually include not only philosophy and moral precepts but also theories about how and why the universe came into being. They provide a rationale for who we are, what we represent, why we are here, and what our proper behavior should be. Often, in discussing cosmology, as much attention is given to the consequences of a failure to believe or behave properly as to the details of the construction of the universe.

Cosmology is closely related to cosmogony, which is an account of the physical creation—and usually also the ordering—of the universe; cosmogony, however, does not normally include morality or offer exemplars of proper behavior. The terms *cosmology* and *cosmogony* also are used by those in other disciplines, especially by astronomers. However, folklorists put a slightly different spin on these words. For an astronomer, *cosmogony* refers to the physical construction—or coming into being—of the universe, and *cosmology* concerns ideas on the functioning of the universe.

Folklorists usually look for cosmology in the myth sequences of a people and expect the cosmology to be peopled with animals that have the ability to speak or at least communicate, with feats of will and character seldom seen in the modern world, and/or with beings who are larger than life and greater than human; they also expect to find in cosmology lessons on how not to live as well as how to construct a proper life.

Once having established the universe, the world of the people, and acceptable patterns of living, the cosmology portion of mythic narrative is completed. Additional episodes that follow the cosmology usually are considered to be an integral portion of mythic narrative but qualitatively different from the cosmological portion of the narrative. There may be competing cosmologies in operation in any given culture; in contemporary American culture, for example, the Judeo-Christian-Muslim account, creationism, and science all offer differing cosmologies. However, once a cosmology is accepted by a person or group and established within a culture, it remains essentially fixed; myth, by contrast, is subject to change in response to a changing world and interactions within it.

Claire R. Farrer

See Also Creation Myths; Culture Hero; Myth.

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Costume, Folk

Any manner of stylizing, marking, or manipulating the appearance of the human body with culturally understood symbols and forms. The term *costume* includes not only clothing but also other body adornments, such as jewelry, cosmetics, hairstyles, masks, tattoos, and scarification, and it can refer to everyday adornment as well as dramatic, ritual, or festival costuming. Costume draws on the expressive power of the individual body to produce social identities within the terms of community aesthetics. Folkloristic studies of costume generally consider how adornment style participates in the bodily performance of individual



Iranian women soldiers, carrying AK-47 rifles with carnations in their barrels, march during the military parade marking the beginning of Iran's "Sacred Military Week" in Tehran, September 22, 1999. (AP/Wide World Photos)

and group identity, as well as how folk manipulate and transform adornment signs and practices within the framework of their own aesthetics.

Costume often is conceived as a symbolic language, composed of clothing signs. Petr Bogatyrev, in his influential study of folk costume in modern Slovakia, pointed out that costume is both an object and a sign having multiple functions, such as the ritual, aesthetic, practical, and ideological. In contexts in which a costume's practical function is downplayed, costume functions as a sign; it becomes an ideological reality. As ideological reality, costume embodies the associations individuals have with the social structures of family, economy or polity, region, ethnicity, religion, and caste or class. The type of folk costume discussed by Bogatyrev often has emerged in colonial or touristic contexts in which self-conscious presentation to outsiders is a key way of negotiating identity. In Western and Eastern Europe, such folk costumes are invariably codifications of past peasant styles representing regional differences, and they often involve symbolic inscription on women's bodies as regional or ethnic symbols. In this way, folk costume is implicated in the maintenance of the cultural or political boundaries of ethnic groups, regions, or nations, particularly in touristic, festival, or colonial contexts.

Folk costume plays a key role in the negotiation of personal and community boundaries, both inside and outside folk groups. Significantly, folklorists who discuss adornment have concentrated on costume's socializing force—its relationship to the maintenance of individual and group identities and the articulation of power relations. This important work on folk costume has considered adornment as an important means of communicating an individual's relationship to a group or community and its traditional values. According to Don Yoder, folk costume expresses identity in a symbolic way, functioning as a "badge of identity" for members of ethnic, religious, and occupational groups. Costume outwardly represents the identity of the folk community and expresses the individual's manifold relationships to and within that community. In many plain religious sects discussed by Yoder, such as the Amish, Mennonites, and Shakers, the rejection of fashion in plain dress historically articulated group separation from mainstream society by embodying the principles of sectarian doctrine and establishing a "hedge" against the temptations of the world. In this way, sect members would be perceived and perceive themselves as different from others. Thus, folk costume promotes group solidarity and maintains personal and group boundaries as individuals embody a community by reshaping their bodies in keeping with group values.

In addition to outwardly embodying identities, costume also plays a key role in the definition and reconfiguration of personal identities and social boundaries within any folk group. In ritual contexts such as rites of passage, for example, adornment practices articulate an individual's relationship to the community by marking culturally significant moments in that individual's life. Young men and women passing from childhood to adulthood often adopt adult attire (such as

long trousers or skirts) as a symbol of their new status in the community. Their change in status is accomplished, in part, by the reconfiguration of their physical appearance in costume—physical transformation embodies personal transformation. Marriage and mourning costumes, contrasted with everyday clothing, indicate the wearers' participation in ritual passage and transformation. In this way, clothing induces individuals to become or remain members of a community by physically representing their integration into the community and their acceptance of group values and distinctions related to age, sex, and status. Within this approach, clothing perpetuates a dominant social code by defining hierarchies and marking separations.

Costume also possesses the power to reconfigure those hierarchies and separations. In other ritual and festival contexts, costume transforms the body's everyday appearance and redefines its boundaries temporarily in fanciful costuming, masking, or clothing that represents and helps enact new, fictional, or performative roles. Masquerade and cross-dressing are major media for inversion and other renegotiations of social boundaries, commonly adopted when individuals try on new roles or identities and when the barriers between individuals are broken down during a period of license. In carnival contexts, elaborate costumes are an important way in which a sense of fun and license is engendered. A key feature of such carnival costumes is often their aesthetic of excess. Elaborate and expensive, these carnival costumes exaggerate and distort the features and proportions of the body, opening up the body and extending its boundaries. This exaggeration and excess contribute to the sense of spectacle and a carnivalesque aesthetic that celebrates the excesses of the body and its pleasures. Costume signs in carnival contexts are multivalent and often potentially subversive; that is, they involve the play and transformation of everyday attire, renegotiating its conventional meanings, if only temporarily.

Costume is likewise dynamic and subversive in cultural contexts in which dress is contested or manipulated through what Elizabeth Wilson has termed "oppositional dress." In oppositional dress, the body is transformed into a site of struggle by disenfranchised groups or disaffected subcultures as they attempt to define themselves by redefining the appearance and meaning of their bodies. Oppositional dress can take several forms, usually through processes of refusal and appropriation. For instance, retentions or revivals of traditional dress by indigenous peoples in colonial contexts in the face of pressures to adopt fashionable, Western dress constitute a form of refusal—self-definition as a strategy of resistance to colonial control or Western cultural imperialism. In some cases, traditional dress becomes a symbol of political movements for economic and political independence. Mahatma Gandhi's use of traditional Indian textiles and dress as a symbol of resistance to British imperial control in the mid-twentieth century signified both economic and cultural independence. By advocating traditional dress, he redefined the colonial social body as Indian, not British, and reasserted the power of native

Indian materials, industries, and production techniques. Resistance through costume also can take the form of revivals of indigenous or traditional dress in postcolonial situations, as expressed by women in Islamic revolutionary contexts who readopt the *chador*, the full veiling prescribed by traditional Islamic law. Again, this costume signifies in complicated ways, both reinscribing women's bodies in traditional gender roles and challenging outside religious or cultural control.

In other cases, new costume forms emerge as subcultures or groups within complex societies appropriate normative clothing forms in an oppositional way. In Western societies, feminist groups historically sought equality through dress reform by appropriating men's jackets and ties for women's professional costume. In Western Europe and the United States, the wearing of black clothing to articulate alternative or decadent sensibilities by nineteenth-century dandies and twentieth-century bohemians was an appropriation of both customary mourning costume and historically respectable bourgeois male dress, exaggerated for everyday wear. This alternative costume draws on the contradictory associations of the color black with death, sexuality, respectability, and monasticism to articulate a complicated stance against mainstream respectability. In these cases, the conventional meaning of any costume style changes, even as its new status as oppositional still relies on the memory of previously respectable associations.

Appropriation also plays a central role in the oppositional costuming practices of contemporary youth subcultures, such as punks who reassemble conventional working-class clothing with symbols of transgression and violence (rips and tears, crosses, and multiple body piercings). Members of these subcultures express complex and contradictory sexual and social identities through adornment practices that appropriate normative or fashionable commodities, signs, and values and reassemble them in terms of their group aesthetic, with the aim of shocking. Dick Hebdige has characterized the style of subcultural groups as a "signifying practice" that draws on the polysemic range of meanings in clothing signs by appropriating available images and symbols from dominant culture and manipulating them in ways that defy conventional assumptions about appropriate appearance. Such styles insist on shifting the terms of any discourse of dress by adding new elements, inverting old elements, and transgressing norms as a means of articulating a challenge to accepted values, foregrounding a sense of difference and asserting self-possession or personal power in the face of powerlessness. This signifying practice is fundamentally polysemic in that appropriated signs do not lose their previous associations—they merely gain new meanings that are foregrounded in uneasy tension with older, more conventional associations. This juxtaposition of seemingly conflicting meanings highlights and expresses larger conflicts in society that these groups wish to address.

In local settings, folk costume does not develop in isolation, and much of contemporary folk costume is polysemic in nature. Like language and other aspects of

material folklife such as foodways and architecture, contemporary costume bears the signs of historical struggles, contacts, borrowing, and exchanges in any locality. In the context of colonization and cultural displacement, new Creole forms emerge from the interaction of different cultural groups' adornment practices. An example of such creolization is the new forms of African American hairstyling that emerged from the collision and renegotiation of different cultural notions about the body in the African diaspora. Kobena Mercer referred to these styles as "ethnic signifiers" that reflect African understandings about hair while incorporating European styles to create new styles specific to African Americans. These styles, which may appear to be "African" or "white" but with a difference, articulate the complex cultural heritage of African Americans and, according to Mercer, are inevitably politicized in the context of inequality or cultural hierarchy.

Even though the trend toward global, transnational flows of fashion commodities continues, folklorists can expect to see folk costumes increasingly characterized by Creole forms and styles. Mainstream fashion is an influence on folk costume that often shapes style and form at a local level. Although some scholars have postulated a distinction between rapidly changing fashionable dress and relatively unchanging folk dress (or what Ted Polhemus and Lynn Proctor have called "anti-fashion"), sustained costume studies reveal a more dynamic folk design process in which fashionable and folk ideas commingle, collide, and interact in local settings. Individuals appropriate new ideas and integrate them into their wardrobes within the terms of their own cultural aesthetic (which might include cut, color, accessory, or rules of assemblage). In addition, international fashion designers increasingly appropriate ideas for styles from folk or "street" fashions, ransacking the past and present for novelty and inspiration and thereby further complicating any clear distinction between "fashionable" and "folk" costume.

More recently, folklorists have moved from looking at clothing merely in terms of an outward, identifiable form or signification to considering the relationship between costume and the body. Costume not only reflects social or group identities but also constitutes them in bodily practice as an integral part of the everyday and habitual practices through which the body is culturally managed and supervised in any culture, practices that produce relationships of power. Thus, dress practices cannot be understood in isolation from other bodily practices, such as food consumption, deportment, gesture, and speech, that stylize the "natural" physical body and render it culturally comprehensible by imbuing it with recognizable attributes linked to identities. Costume, then, is linked to the study of "bodylore" and provides a lens through which to see how identities are formed, contested, or redefined through the body and its appearance, boundaries, and sensations.

Kathryn E. Wilson

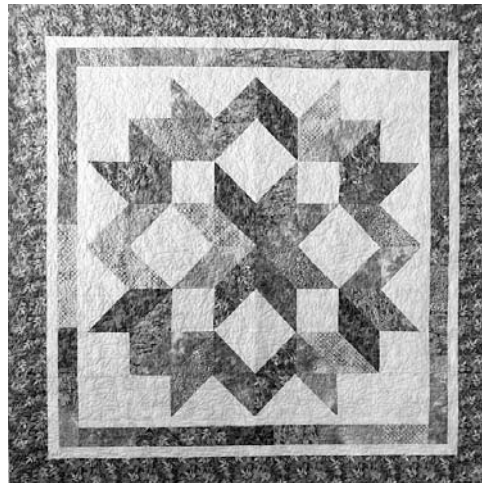
See Also Carnival; Festival; Mask; Material Culture.

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Craft, Folk

Skill or process of creating goods, usually by hand. Craft first attracted folkloristic interest in the nineteenth century because the skills involved clearly showed transmission through tradition and because the products of these skills could be compared across time and space. Craft was essential to utilities in daily life and also could have decorative and spiritual functions. In addition to the skills and processes that provide the basic equipment of domestic life—tools, furnishings,



Star of Autumn quilt by Karen Hogan.
(Marilyn Stevens Photography)

houses, clothes—crafts include ritual, religious, and artistic objects, and they foster beliefs about the highly skilled workers who produce them, as in oft-collected legends of blacksmiths.

The concept of craft is closely related to perceptions of art. Craft in nineteenth-century conceptions of folk cultures characterized folklore more than art because of the assumption that art represented originality and leisure and craft symbolized work and repetition more in keeping with the stereotype of folk culture. In a modification of this view, scholars pointed to arts such as Pennsylvania-German painted furniture that grew out of traditional crafts. Up until the 1970s, the dominant perspective viewed craft as having utilitarian intent and application and art as having a principally aesthetic character. Thus, many of the objects categorized as art were decorative, and crafts were treated as tools. The limitation of this simplification emphasizing form and function is that artifacts have multiple functions, and the artistic appreciation of skill and beauty in folk design can apply to non-decorated objects. Considering craft and art as behavior rather than form, scholars recognized craft and art as parts of each other, a symbolic kind of action. Craft had an active role, referring to the process of construction and its integration with aesthetic or artistic judgments and traditions.

The shifts in the conception of craft and art reflect changes since the nineteenth century in the kinds of approaches used to study craft. Many early folkloristic studies of craft considered the products of traditional crafts in a “natural history of civilization” or cultural evolution from the primitive to the industrial. Another early approach took up questions of diffusion and transmission of tradition across cultures and used variations among crafts to interpret cultural borrowings and map regions. Because crafts reflected daily life, another approach arose to document the folklife or historical folk culture of a regional-ethnic community. Closely related to the examination of crafts as products meant for an entire community is the role of craft as the product of an individual with creative and aesthetic goals. Especially since the 1970s, other approaches have arisen that focus on craft as a form of communication. The process of creating, consuming, using, and changing crafts has received attention as an important type of nonverbal behavior humans use to express themselves.

Evolution

In 1871, following Charles Darwin’s theories of origin and development in nature, Edward Tylor promoted the study of cultural evolution through “survivals.” Traditional crafts among tribal societies in the world, he surmised, were evidence of a low, “primitive” stage of development that led to the highest level of industrial invention in “civilization.” Evolutionists following Tylor organized crafts by technological type and typically arranged them by level of advancement to form a global evolution of civilization.

Diffusion

One problem with early evolutionary doctrine was that it did not explain similarities in customs and crafts among widely separated groups. The comparisons that were made were typically ahistorical in that the cultural occurrence was assumed to be part of a universal level of advancement rather than a period in a group's history. If cultures move and influence custom because of historical migrations and cultural contact, however, then the progressive explanation for civilization could be challenged. In addition to questions of origin and development, questions of diffusion and transmission arose to show that cultures not only developed in place but also moved and influenced others. Crafts became important evidence of such movements because types of crafts could be visibly traced and comparisons could be made according to date of manufacture. The most prominent example is the explanation for the similarity of many Native American and Asian folk shelters and crafts. In 1904, Waldemar Bogoras, for example, wrote on the comparable material culture in Siberia and Alaska, supporting a migration from Asia across the Bering Strait into North America.

A notable movement called the *Kulturkreislehre* (culture-cluster school) arose in German-speaking countries to examine diffusion of folk ideas as demonstrated in folk crafts. Fritz Graebner, Wilhelm Schmidt, and Wilhelm Koppers, to name some notable figures in this movement, reconstructed the diffusion of crafts by determining clusters of cultural traits that moved together. The assumption was that migrations and contacts reduced the importance of the environment. Mapping diffusion according to this assumption could lead to a failure to deal with historical accidents, local or individual developments, and social change.

Community and Individual

Rather than slavishly following an all-encompassing culture, traditional crafts workers observed by many scholars expressed their individuality within community traditions. Reacting to the German emphasis on cultural clusters, Franz Boas leaned toward the study of the variety of cultures, rather than their inevitable unity. Fieldwork among Eskimos during the 1880s alerted him to the control that a people maintained over their traditions and over the integrity of a cultural whole as a small community. He argued that the focus of research should be not on survivals but on the processes by which culture has developed.

This accounting for crafts work taking on the character of negotiation between individual and community could be accomplished by studies of the history and ethnography of individual societies. Although diffusion emphasizes similarities over space, individual and community studies offer views of variance influenced by personality and local conditions. A movement related to this idea is in folklife or folk cultural (from the Swedish *folkliv* and the German *Volksleben* and *Volkskunde*) studies emerging during the late nineteenth century, usually emphasizing holistic

study of everyday practices, artifacts, and expressions in community context. Crafts became significant as representations of living traditions pointing to the integrated life and labor of regional-ethnic communities. From its relatively minor role in English-American folklore scholarship during the late nineteenth century, folklife study gained prominence in the United States, particularly after World War II.

Rather than using models of closed peasant societies, many American studies have applied an ethnographic approach centering on the personality and process by which individuals have the need to create and the urge to express themselves. Influenced especially by Michael Owen Jones's *The Hand Made Object and Its Maker* (1975), these studies have offered a special folkloristic mission to describe the role of tradition as evidenced by the creative process of handcrafting in complex, industrial societies. A spate of "life histories" and psychologically oriented studies of crafts workers maintaining tradition and innovation in urban and industrial settings appeared to underscore the continual relevance of handwork and tradition in modern life. In such studies, crafts workers' motivations and social functions were examined closely. Rather than belonging to one community, crafts workers had many communities to serve and had individual reasons for presenting the styles and forms they followed.

Communication

The results of close examinations of individual crafts workers suggested that the process of craft is an everyday activity that often arises in response to certain situations. Although popular belief in postindustrial societies suggested that humans would not be involved in creative activities because of the rise of electronics and a service economy, folkloristic studies, since the 1980s particularly, have proposed a close examination of the symbols and metaphors communicated when humans "make things." Crafting in such a view becomes a metaphoric model for doing, rather than a technical procedure for turning out a product. With craft, there is the suggestion of drawing on tradition and innovation for use, of taking time to convert nature into something personal and meaningful. Stories and environments can be crafted as well as chairs and baskets.

The material process of crafting grasps ideas in ways that speech cannot. In addition to the recovery of historical crafts, such as basketry or pottery, that is common in scholarship, some folklorists suggested many non-canonized traditions, such as cooking meals, renovating houses, arranging yards, and folding papers, as everyday efforts of grasping ideas through craft processes. In a study of the construction and readjustment of tract houses in Los Angeles, Michael Owen Jones argued that such modern activities revealed processes of tradition and creativity. Homeowners often announced their intentions for establishing an identity through the process of construction. The approach implied more directly behavioral interpretations rather than sociocultural ones, with attention to the

reactions and responses of particular individuals to the patterns, qualities, or symbols of activities as well as objects.

Such an approach broadened the scope of the concept of folk craft from the materials of tradition to the process involved. Some kinds of materials previously neglected in folkloristic study became open to inquiry. Tourist and revival crafts came under study because they presented opportunities to examine the meanings of tradition as it is altered when sold or used in certain situations. Such examinations have also considered the role that consumption and reuse play in the perception of crafts in contemporary society. In addition, the role of ceremonial crafts in rituals and festivals received renewed attention as vehicles for symbolic communication.

Many of these studies were situational, much as ethnographic studies of speech communication are, and had as their goal the uncovering of ways that meaning is communicated and perceived. Some authorities on verbal behavior, such as W. F. H. Nicolaisen, began using craft as an essential metaphor for folklore because it stressed the process of bringing materials into an aesthetic form relying on individual creativity and communal tradition. Craftsmanship was a model of action, a “praxis,” as some scholars have described it, appropriate to cultural expression generally, for it recognized individuals making use of material at hand in response to audience and environment, injecting variety into a process of repetition.

Simon J. Bronner

See Also Art, Folk; Material Culture.

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Creation Myths

A basic myth type through which all cultures clothe their beliefs and aspirations in the fanciful stories we refer to as myths. Myths can be said to be cultural dreams.

Like dreams, they are marked by impossible events, a confusion of characters, and often a radical disregard of time sequence and place consistency. If we believe that dreams, when analyzed, can reveal useful information about ourselves, it is not surprising that we look to our myths as symbolic vehicles for significant collective understandings of the world and cosmos in which we find ourselves.

No cultural dream type is more universal than the creation myth. The creation myth is a *cosmogony*, a composite of the sense conveyed by the Greek words *kosmos* (order) and *genesis* (birth). All cultures have stories of their beginnings. In their often bizarre events creation myths answer the collective need of cultures to know where they came from and how they were formed. As the classic psychoanalytic patient searching for self-identity is led to an examination of the beginnings, the details of birth, the details of parentage, the same process applies to cultures in search of identity and significance. So it is, for instance, that psychologist and mythologist Marie-Louise von Franz defines the creation myth as “an awakening toward consciousness” (24). In that process, since no one was there to see the beginning, we construct metaphorical and symbolic narratives clothed in the elements of real life experience—fathers, mothers, sexuality, birth, death, the shortcomings of human beings. To be sure, creation myths are affected deeply by particular cultural understandings, themselves in part the result of particular environments and social conditions. The creator-father god of a patriarchal warrior culture creates in a way that reflects such a culture. The creator-mother earth goddess of an agricultural society creates in quite another way.

As culturally based as they naturally are, however, creation myths, when compared, reveal certain universal or semi-universal patterns, or motifs. The historian of religion Mircea Eliade, sees the creation myth as a universal narration describing a process by which chaos becomes cosmos. The earliest humans faced disorder in a desperate quest for survival. Creation myths gave them meaning in an ultimately ordered or purposeful universe. When a culture dreams its creation story it tells how ultimate reality takes form in the elements of the particular known world, whether that world is a pueblo of the American Southwest or a village along the Tigris in ancient Mesopotamia. Cultures always see creation as having taken place at the center of the world wherever the given culture believes that center to be.

Furthermore, it might be said that the creation myth is the most important story we have to tell, because it serves as a model for everything we do, for the human act of creation in whatever form it takes—the creating of a family, the destroying of what we do not like, the building of a house, the planting of a field, the making of a work of art. Mircea Eliade understands creation myths as symbolic descriptions of a reality in which all creative acts are “paradigmatic models” (Eliade, *Sacred*, 45), reflections of an “eternal return” to an identifying center.

A more specific comparison of the world’s creation myths reveals certain basic creation types within the overall form. Commentators on these myths have

categorized them in different ways from various perspectives. Anthropologists, religion scholars, mythologists, and psychologists have long recognized creation myth types. A categorization of creation myths that in effect absorbs these various approaches is outlined by religion scholar Charles Long in his now classic *Alpha: The Myths of Creation*. Long's types provide a clear basis for categorizing creation myths. Long sees five essential types. The most common type, especially for monotheistic cultures, is the Ex Nihilo Creation, creation from nothing, that is, creation that occurs in total nonexistence, from the creator's breath, body fluids, words, or thoughts. Almost as common is creation from Chaos, from a preexisting, undifferentiated or "chaotic" state represented by primal elements or sometimes by a primal object such as a cosmic egg. In many parts of the world, where animistic religions prevail, we find the World Parent Creation, involving creation from the union, separation, division or sacrifice—even dismemberment—of an original male and female. A form particularly prevalent in the Native American Southwest is the Emergence Creation, creation by way of a hole in the earth from which the original people emerged from a world under this one. Finally, there is the Earth Diver Creation, also prevalent among many Native North American peoples. In this type, creation comes about when a creature dives into the depths of the primordial waters and brings up the bit of mud or clay from which the earth will be formed. There are, of course, many variations and combinations of these basic types, and all of the types contain in themselves various examples of universal subtypes or themes such as the creation of the first humans, the creator twins, the trickster creator, the failed creation, the fall of humanity and, often a subsequent flood and re-creation.

Again, it must be stressed that no myth exists without cultural clothes. The creation myth types outlined by Long and others are hypothetical constructs based on comparisons of cultural expressions and can only be used in a kind of thought experiment that allows us to analyze the significance and meaning of particular types of creation mythology or of creation myths as a whole.

David Leeming

See Also Cosmology; Culture Hero; Hero/Heroine, Folk; Myth.

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Cryptozoology

Cryptozoology is the search for “hidden” animals, those once thought to have become extinct but that still survive, animals that were thought to have been only mythical but that actually existed or were based on actual animals, and animals that have yet to be named by science. This field is one that teeters on the edge of legitimacy, as there have been examples of animals discovered that fit the criteria just listed—the most famous examples are those of the coelacanth, the okapi, the giant panda, and the mountain gorilla. The first, the coelacanth, is a lobe-finned fish thought to have become extinct along with the dinosaurs; the others were thought to be mythical by Western scientists who discounted stories of the creatures from local inhabitants. Unknown, noncryptid species are found by mainstream science on a regular basis.

Cryptozoology finds its modern genesis in the work of Bernard Heuvelmans (1916–2001) and Ivan Sanderson (1911–1973). Both trained scientists, they began writing about anomalous animals in the 1940s and 1950s. In 1955, Heuvelmans, a French-born Belgian zoologist, released *Sur la Piste des Bêtes Ignorées* (On the Track of Unknown Animals). This was the first influential work in the field and inspired legions of followers and intellectual children. He authored many books on the subject, including the seminal *In the Wake of the Sea Serpents* (1965). His friend and colleague, Scottish zoologist Ivan Sanderson, produced *Abominable Snowmen: Legend Come to Life* (1961). It was the first major work on what Sanderson called ABSMs (Abominable Snowmen). Heuvelmans attributes the term *cryptozoology* to Sanderson. In his work, Heuvelmans argues that the search for cryptids (individual organisms that fall into the category) must be thorough and scientific, as the object is to look for not only animals in the field, but also to discover the folkloric nature of such creatures. It is up to the cryptozoologist to weed through the mountains of legends, artwork, and national and cultural legends to find whether such stories and descriptions of strange animals have any basis in reality.

Following this tradition, Adrienne Mayor produced the groundbreaking work *The First Fossil Hunters* (2000), which argued that many Greek legends of monsters, heroes, and other exotic life were attempts by ancient writers to make sense of their discovery of fossil bones. While Heuvelmans was a generalist, most modern cryptozoologists specialize in one particular area, as Sanderson did. Like Mayor, Richard Ellis, and Jeff Meldrum, they study fossils, sea monsters, or Bigfoot, respectively.

Jeffrey Meldrum displays what he describes as a casting of a footprint from a “Bigfoot” creature, taken in the Blue Mountains of eastern Washington, in his laboratory at Idaho State University in Pocatello on September 19, 2006. (AP/Wide World Photos)



Current leading practitioners who take a more generalist approach include Karl Shuker and Loren Coleman.

As an intellectual endeavor, cryptozoology has been studied as much as cryptozoologists have sought hidden animals. For example, literary scholar Peter Dendle has looked at the hunt for cryptids as filling a number of psychological roles—including as a vehicle by which to explore the problems of deforestation, environmentalism, and the profound impact of human society on animal species worldwide. In addition, he sees the fascination with cryptids as a holdover from medieval times and the wide array of modern books on the subject as the latest incarnation of illuminated bestiaries. Cryptozoologists focus on the search for large, imposing beasts that could be labeled monsters. They search for the dark, slouching hulks that lurk in the darker corners of the human psyche as much as they do the dark corners of the world.

One of the difficulties faced by cryptozoologists is explaining just what they do and how they go about it. Where zoologists, biologists, botanists, and the like have established methodologies for studying living things and general paradigms for making sense of what they are doing, cryptozoologists as yet do not. Though many practitioners attempt to be as “scientific” as they can, there are no accepted, uniform, or successful methods of pursuing cryptids. Certain technologies, like motion sensitive cameras, night vision devices, and audio recorders are utilized. Adding that none of the most famous cryptids, the Loch Ness Monster, Sasquatch, Yeti, and Chupacabra, has yet to be proven to exist with certainty, it has been difficult for cryptozoology to make a breakthrough into mainstream

science. There have been attempts at codifying the methods of cryptozoology, thus legitimizing it, and individual amateur naturalists and professional scientists have explained how they went about researching this cryptid or that, but there are few uniform techniques articulated.

To date, the most coherent attempt to codify cryptozoological thinking has been Chad Arment's *Cryptozoology: Science and Speculation* (2004). He states that cryptozoology "is a targeted search methodology for zoological discovery" (9). The cryptozoologist looks for "ethnoknowns," life forms that have had human contact prior to scientific description through mythological and legendary appearances in written and oral tradition. Therefore, what separates a cryptid from the average unknown biological species, of which many examples exist, is the folkloric factor. If a biologist discovers a new species of beetle, plant, or bird—even if that biologist suspected it was there—it is not a cryptid.

If the animal appeared in some culture's folklore prior to scientific discovery, then it is a cryptid. Therefore, Arment continues, the methodology a cryptozoologist follows is to collect mythical and legendary descriptions of a biological entity (he and most cryptozoologists are adamant that ghostly, apparitional, or otherwise paranormal subjects are outside the purview of what they do). They consult oral and written traditions, ancient texts, religious beliefs, and other sources for references to the entity. Using that as a basis, the researcher then compares those descriptions to known taxa to search for resemblances of behavior, morphology, and geographic location to posit possible matches. If the researcher thinks the organism extant, then a "targeted search" is made of the possible habitat the cryptid might occupy. If the organism is thought to be extinct, the museum collections where such fossils are found are consulted. While this is the general theoretical idea of searching for a cryptid, once researchers head out into the field, the idea of uniform methodologies has become somewhat more problematic. A number of techniques have been employed by both amateur naturalists and professional scientists in the field, but they have been applied unevenly.

Brian Regal

See Also Animals.

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Cultural Property

The real (tangible) elements and intellectual (intangible) elements of culture to which an individual or group claims ownership. The term *cultural property* is a legal term referencing the concept that tangible and intangible cultural products can be owned by an individual or group, to the exclusion of all others. Cultural property is of two types with differing issues associated with each. Cultural property can be tangible, in the form of sacred sites and natural landscapes, monuments, buildings, human remains, archaeological artifacts, handicrafts, and other “real property” that has a cultural dimension. Cultural property can also refer to intangible cultural heritage that falls within the realm of “intellectual property” in the form of language, music, song, dance, ritual, customs, local knowledge, oral narratives, and literary creations. Although native and indigenous groups were the first to be concerned with cultural property (especially tangible cultural heritage) and its perceived piracy or misappropriation, cultural property is now a concept applied to all heritage artifacts and traditional cultural expressions.

Tangible Cultural Property

Cultural property issues surrounding prehistoric and historic artworks, artifacts, monuments, and sites have been an important concern for folklorists, ethnographers, archaeologists, curators, and archivists since the early 1900s. The assigning of cultural property ownership rights to nation-states and the protection of cultural property by those political entities has been at issue in international legal fora for decades. In 1954, the concept of cultural property was brought to prominence by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) when it used the term in the passage of an international convention to protect and recognize monuments, works of art, traditional sacred spaces, and other tangible culture. The destruction and pillaging of tangible cultural products and sites due to war, vandalism, and theft had become an international crisis. UNESCO maintained that these sites and artistic treasures were part of the “cultural heritage of all mankind” (1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict).

Since the Hague Convention, individual countries and the international community have sought to protect cultural property and regulate its movement across borders by passing national legislation and international conventions that rely on the collaboration among lawyers, diplomats, cultural custodians, scholars, and traditional communities. In 1970, UNESCO adopted the “Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property,” followed in 1972 by the “Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage,” the “Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage” (2001), the “UNESCO

Declaration Concerning the International Destruction of Cultural Heritage” (2003) and several other diplomatic instruments that sought to preserve and protect tangible cultural property.

In the United States, the 1990 passage of the “Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act” (NAGPRA) requires every museum receiving public funding to survey and identify Native American remains and other cultural property in their collections, consult with the tribes of origin and repatriate any objects that are requested. Although many objects may have been purchased legally years ago from tribal members, the added “moral right” to cultural property supersedes the legal property right. In recognition of the complex nature of cultural property rights, many scholarly and professional organizations (American Association of Museums, American Library Association, American Folklore Society, etc.) have passed codes of ethics in recent years that address the issues faced by cultural custodians and scholars as they attempt to protect the rights of indigenous communities and other tradition bearers to their cultural property, while providing appropriate access to heritage materials for researchers.

Intangible Cultural Property

Intangible cultural property is synonymous with *intellectual property* (IP), a legal term that is used to assert legal ownership over creations of the mind (artistic, commercial, cultural, and spiritual). Under IP law, owners (individuals or groups) are granted exclusive rights to a variety of intangible cultural assets, including music, song, dance, dramatic performance, ritual, oral narrative, health processes, literary products, words, designs, symbols, and other manifestations of nonmaterial art and culture. IP rights are established and protected using several legal mechanisms, including patents, copyrights, trademarks, and industrial design rights. The term *intellectual property* is a twentieth-century concept that has been attributed to the establishment of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) as a special agency of UNESCO in 1967 (Lemley 2005, 1033).

The expansion of cultural property rights to apply to intangible heritage and folklore has required new mechanisms, such as *sui generis* legislation that fits the particular circumstance and cultural source community. In 1998, WIPO initiated a new program to explore the possibilities for protecting genetic resources, traditional knowledge, and folklore. A series of fact-finding missions were held in 1998–1999 to identify the needs and concerns of tradition bearers and cultural communities. This research resulted in the formation of a new WIPO Intergovernmental Committee (IGC) in 2003 to address the issue of “Intellectual Property Rights and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore.” In that same year, UNESCO introduced the “International Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.” The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) are also involved with international negotiations that

impact the cultural property rights of tradition bearers and indigenous communities. The debates surrounding the IP rights to traditional heritage have been ongoing (at this writing) for over seven years, with no international agreement reached on the appropriate way to protect the IP rights of tradition bearers to their traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions (i.e., folklore).

Folklore as Intellectual Property

Applying intellectual property rights to folklore creates an incentive for tradition bearers by providing monetary benefits for the licensed use of traditional culture. On the other hand, defensive IP legislation can restrict the use (or misuse) of traditional cultural expressions by prohibiting cultural elements from being shared beyond the source community. However, establishing ownership of and enforcing IP rights to traditional cultural expressions is problematic on many levels. For instance, on the international level, UNESCO and WIPO delegations are composed of legal representatives of national governments who are representing tradition bearers and often asserting state ownership over the traditional cultural expressions of the minority cultures and indigenous groups within their political borders. The tradition bearers themselves are seldom participants on official delegations that will be determining the fate of their cultural property rights. On the regional level, one complication in assigning cultural property rights is that elements of traditional culture are often claimed and used by more than one individual or group. In addition, culture is not contained by political and/or geographic boundaries, and tradition bearers are often living in diaspora, not in their homeland or source community. On the community level, shared cultural traditions are the cultural property of community members who may not agree on their provenance, their use, or their accessibility.

The concept of cultural property has been championed by national governments and indigenous communities to provide a means of protection and right to ownership of tangible cultural products and sites. Intellectual property rights were historically used for economic and industrial growth and referenced the intangible cultural property of one individual author or creator. The application of IP rights to folklore is complex and often contradictory, especially since folklore has no single creator. Critics of assigning intellectual property rights to intangible cultural heritage, especially advocates of the “free culture movement,” see intellectual property as a form of protectionism and a creative monopoly that is detrimental to the transmission of culture and to a healthy public domain that will ensure creativity and cultural vigor.

Cultural property as a concept is currently being used in a much broader arena—that of the international arts marketplace. Beyond recognizing social and spiritual value, cultural property now has a market value and is the object of contestation. The questions of who owns culture and who will benefit from its sale are the basis of many of the debates at UNESCO, WIPO, and WTO, as well as

the crux of regional and local legal actions. Beyond the defensive protection of monuments, sites, artifacts, and the intangible cultural heritage of traditional communities, we have seen the rise of legislation that attempts to protect cultural property by restricting the transmission and use of oral traditions, and advocates the repatriation of cultural artifacts from cultural institutions that have been custodians for decades. The issues surrounding cultural property and its relation to folklore and traditional culture promise to be a point of contention for many years to come.

Peggy Bulger

See Also Cultural Relativism; Cultural Studies.

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Cultural Relativism

A key methodological concept in anthropology that is now universally accepted within the discipline. This concept is based on theoretical considerations that are fundamental to the understanding of “scientific” anthropology, just as they are

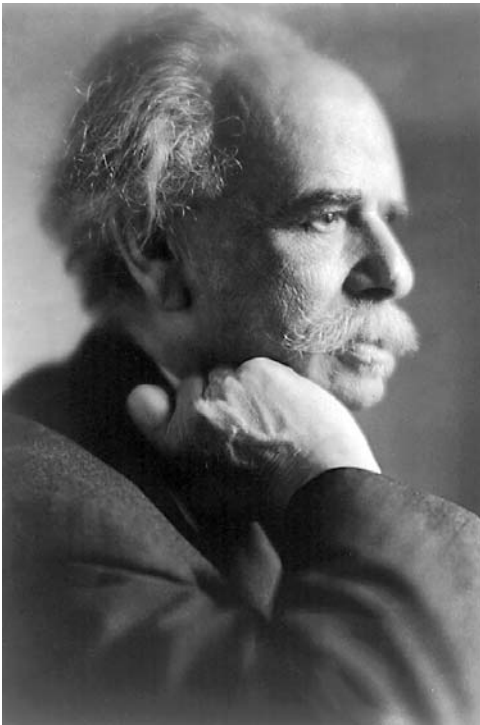
basic to the understanding of the anthropological frame of mind. Cultural relativism posits that all cultures are of equal value and need to be studied from a neutral point of view. The study of any culture has to be done with a cold and neutral eye so that a particular culture can be understood on its own merits and not those of another culture. Historically, cultural relativism has been combined with historical particularism—the notion that the proper way to study culture is to study one culture in depth. The implications of cultural relativism and historical particularism have been significant to anthropology and to the social sciences in general.

The roots of cultural relativism go to the rejection of the comparative school of the nineteenth century on the basis of exact and specific ethnological information. This information rejected the comparative school's methodology and, as a result, its evolutionary conclusions. Furthermore, because the basis of cultural relativism is a scientific view of culture, it also rejects value judgments on cultures. There is, in this view, no single scale of values that holds true for all cultures and by which all cultures can be judged. Beliefs, aesthetics, morals, and other cultural institutions can only be judged through their relevance to a given culture. For example, labels of good and bad are culture specific and cannot be imposed in cultural analysis. The reasoning behind this view is, of course, that what is good in one culture may be bad in another. This indicates that every culture determines its own ethical judgments to regulate the proper behavior of its members. An offshoot of this view is the assumption that most individuals would prefer to live in the culture in which they have been acculturated. It must be added that the *cultural* in cultural relativism and historical particularism refers to specific cultures and not to a more abstract, singular, and general concept of culture.

The reasoning behind all this comes from two distinct sources: the reaction to the inaccuracies of the evolutionary schemes of the comparative school and the desire to study culture from an objective value perspective. To be a scientific concept, culture has to be studied as an object without evaluative consideration. When we are not able to do that, we no longer have a science of culture. Among the many anthropologists associated with this point of view are Franz Boas and his students Alfred Kroeber, Robert Lowie, Melville Herskovits, Ruth Benedict, Paul Radin, Margaret Mead, and Ruth Bunzel. Franz Boas was the key theoretician in this group.

Boas published his views on the comparative method in 1896 in "The Limitations of the Comparative Method of Anthropology," the first exposition of cultural relativism. According to the tenets of cultural relativism, there are no inferior or superior cultures; all cultures are equal. To order cultures in an evolutionary scheme is unfeasible. All premises of good and bad and/or upper and lower are culture bound and ethnocentric. Put that way, we can see that schemes of evolution are ethnocentric, not objective.

According to Boas, there are four major limitations to the comparative method: (1) It is impossible to account for similarity in all the types of culture by claiming



Franz Boas, who helped spread the discipline of anthropology in the United States, was a scholar of broad learning, concerned with all aspects of humans and human culture. (Library of Congress)

that they are alike because of the unity of the human mind, (2) the existence of like traits in different cultures is not as important as the comparative school claims, (3) similar traits may have developed for very different purposes in differing cultures, and (4) the view that cultural differences are of minor importance is baseless. The differences between cultures were, Boas asserted, of major anthropological significance. Boas did not stop his critique of the comparative school there. He also delineated a methodology to replace it. His new method emphasized that culture traits have to be studied in detail and within the cultural whole and that the distribution of a culture trait within neighboring cultures also should be examined. This approach suggests that a culture needs to be analyzed within its full context.

Boas thought that this approach would help the anthropologist understand the environmental factors that shape a culture, explain the psychological factors that frame the culture, and illuminate the history of a local custom. Boas was trying to establish the inductive method in anthropology and abandon the comparative method. He emphasized that the primary goal of anthropology was to study individual societies and that generalizations could come only on the basis of accumulated data. Thus, he argued that anthropology should be an objective and inductive science. In an age when the scientific method was important, this change in the discipline resulted in the establishment of anthropology in universities. Boas's

students were among the first to establish some of the most important anthropology programs on U.S. campuses.

Moreover, Boas attacked racism throughout his career; he summarized his views on racism in *The Mind of Primitive Man* (1911). According to Boas, the sweep of cultures, to be found in association with any subspecies, was so extensive that there could be no relationship between race and culture.

Following Boas and his emphasis on studying as many societies as possible, Alfred Kroeber, the best-known anthropologist of the period, produced a good deal of ethnography. In his “Eighteen Professions” (1915), which is a credo, Kroeber affirmed two of the basic tenets of cultural relativism: (1) all men are completely civilized, and (2) there are no higher and lower cultures. Much later in his career, Kroeber made three additional points in regard to cultural relativism: (1) that science should begin with questions and not with answers, (2) that science is a dispassionate endeavor that should not accept any ideology, and (3) that sweeping generalizations are not compatible with science. Another major cultural relativist of the period was Robert Lowie, whose work is most significant among his peers for its development of cultural relativism.

Lowie probably came closer to Boas’s views on the proper practice of anthropology than any other anthropologist of his time. He was deeply rooted in the philosophy of science and accepted cultural anthropology as a science. His views and criticism of theoreticians such as Lewis Henry Morgan were based on this scientific worldview. His critique of Morgan’s evolutionary theory was based on epistemology, namely, that Morgan’s evolutionary scheme for the development of kinship systems was speculative and had no proof. Furthermore, Morgan’s data were often erroneous, according to Lowie.

Additional refinements of the concept of cultural relativism were suggested by Ruth Benedict. For Benedict, cultural anthropology was the discipline that studied the differences between cultures. This approach was fully Boasian in character. In this approach, the “s” that was added to the word *culture* by Boas and others became crucial. The interest had shifted from culture to cultures. In addition, when the focus shifted to a particular culture, there was a concern with what happened to the individual in that culture. A culture was integrated, and it was more than the sum of its parts. Finally, every culture was different from every other culture. Benedict took the Boasian program a step further through the concept of cultural configurations or patterns that allowed her to engage in cross-cultural comparison. Although her use of this approach was extremely reductionistic, it represented a new direction in cultural relativism by transcending the data collection of historical particularism and attempting to organize the data in an explanatory manner.

The attempt to understand cultures on their own terms and the attempt to pursue objective ethnography are the major accomplishments of cultural relativism. These accomplishments have sometimes led to a lack of theoretical depth and an

undervaluation of the ethnographer's own culture. However, the battle against ethnocentrism and the objective view of cultures remain permanent contributions of cultural relativism.

Mark Glazer

See Also Anthropological Approach; Esoteric/Exoteric Factor; Ethnic Folklore.

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Cultural Studies

Interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and often counterdisciplinary projects to describe, analyze, and theorize the ways in which cultural practices are entangled with and within relations of power. Cultural studies (sometimes termed *cultural criticism* or *cultural critique*) is an international set of discursive practices in which culture is viewed as a site of serious contest and conflict over meaning. The questions of how meaning is made, what meaning is made, who makes meaning, and for whom meaning is made are explored through borrowings from Marxist—in particular, revisionist (sometimes known as “neo-” or “post-”) Marxist—writings on class; feminist writings on women's cultures; postcolonialist writings on race, ethnicity, and nation; lesbian-and-gay-studies writings on gender and sexuality; and poststructuralist and postmodernist writings on language and other signifying

systems. Positioning itself, as noted in a collection of essays edited by Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula Treichler, as being “committed to the study of the entire range of a society’s arts, beliefs, institutions, and communicative practices,” cultural studies rejects the traditional humanities’ equation of “culture” with “high culture.” Instead, these essayists concluded, cultural studies practitioners work to disclose the politics that underlie hierarchical distinctions such as high and low or elite, popular, and folk, arguing that all “forms of cultural production need to be studied in relation to other cultural practices and to social and historical structures.” Cultural studies practitioners work within an intellectual and political tradition that seeks not only to record culture but also to intervene actively in it.

Initiated by Raymond Williams’s attempt to define the relations between culture and society, E. P. Thompson’s work on class identity, and Richard Hoggart’s work on literacy, cultural studies was first institutionalized as a discipline with the creation of the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham, England, in 1964, under Hoggart’s directorship. In 1968, Stuart Hall became its second director. Focusing on how meanings are generated and circulated in industrial societies, participants in the Birmingham Center developed an interest in class-based power relations, in the production, marketing, and consumption of popular forms of expressive and material culture, as well as vernacular uses of those forms, and in subcultural theory. Key to British cultural studies discussions during this period were continental influences, especially the work of Marxist theorists Theodor Adorno, Antonio Gramsci, and Louis Althusser.

As cultural studies grew into an international set of discursive practices, its focus became more diverse. For example, scholars in American cultural studies, though influenced by the Birmingham model, have also been drawn to the work of anthropologists Clifford Geertz and Victor Turner, literary and social theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, and writers associated with the initiatives of multiculturalism—for example, Patrick Brantlinger, Chandra Mukerji, and Michael Schudson. Cultural studies now encompasses critiques of sociocultural constructions of gender, race, ethnicity, nationalism, and sexuality in addition to class and maps the interrelations of the traditional, the emergent, the local, and the global in addition to (though frequently as part of) the popular. Still heavily revisionist-Marxist, its practitioners draw insights from the writers associated with poststructuralism (Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan, Julia Kristeva, Michel Foucault, Michel de Certeau, and Gilles Deleuze), from the theorists of postmodernism (Walter Benjamin, Jean-François Lyotard, and Frederic Jameson) as well as postcolonialism (Edward Said) and subaltern studies (Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak).

Folkloristics intersects with cultural studies when it follows Américo Paredes’s challenges of the 1970s “to place questions of the politics of culture at the heart of the discipline of folklore.” As Charles L. Briggs and Amy Shuman noted in their 1993 “New Perspectives” issue of *Western Folklore*, this means, on the

one hand, “understanding that folklore is already (in Derrida’s terms) a politics of culture” and, on the other hand, understanding that the discipline of folkloristics is, through its representational practices, also a politics of culture. In other words, when folklorists address how folklore is shaped by and in turn shapes sociocultural power relations, they participate in the cultural studies project.

Exploring the matrix of folk, vernacular, popular, and local performances as a politics of culture, folklorists have begun to theorize cultural production from both global and local positionings. Marxist folklorist Jack Zipes, for example, has disclosed the workings of ideology in popularly reproduced fairy tales. John Dorst has described the traditionalizing practices of an elite U.S. suburb that, in a post-modern turn, inscribes and markets itself through “pamphlets, brochures, glossy travel magazines, gallery displays, postcards, tourist snapshots, amateur art, styles of interior decoration, and suburban architecture and landscaping.” And Susan Davis has analyzed the way in which public parades, although frequently used to assert the dominant culture’s ideological agendas, may also function for subordinated groups “as vehicles for protest as well as for historical commemoration.” José Limón has historicized and localized the study of social contradictions of race, class, and gender in Mexican American social poetry, and Barbara Babcock has explored how Cochiti women “have contrived to tell stories” through their pottery about men’s storytelling, thereby subverting “masculine discursive control” and disturbing “the distribution of [local] power profoundly.” Alesia García has articulated the ways in which indigenous storytelling functions as a form of cultural resistance and preservation. Deborah Kapchan has explored the emergent politics of gendered performances in the Moroccan marketplace, and Arjun Appaduræ and colleagues, focusing on South Asian expressive traditions, have brought together a set of essays that cumulatively call for a “full and direct encounter between the problematics of performance and textuality, on the one hand, and of social and cultural history, on the other.” Situating their work in respect to a movement “toward somewhat larger-scale ideas of context, in which broader ideological frameworks, historical currents, and social formations are brought into the conceptualization of” such key concepts among folklorists as “context,” Appaduræ and colleagues foregrounded a process that is furthered in “Common Ground: Keywords for the Study of Expressive Culture,” a 1996 special issue of the *Journal of American Folklore* edited by Burt Feintuch that invoked Raymond Williams’s seminal work.

Finally, disclosing folkloristics as a politics of culture, folklorists such as Richard Bauman and John W. Roberts have addressed the ways in which the discipline has been, from its early foundation in Romantic Nationalism, participatory in the dominant culture’s appropriations of folk culture as a means of enhancing hegemonic ideological agendas. Like their anthropological colleagues, folklorists have begun to critique the scientific essentialism of folkloristic paradigms and methods,

in particular, as Camilla Collins has argued, the fallacy of scientific objectivity and the subject-object relations constructed with the discourse of older participant-observation positionings. In short, the broad range of folkloristic representational practices, as well as the ways in which those practices are enmeshed within the socioeconomic politics of our supporting institutions, have been re-situated through discursive practices that are increasingly self-conscious and politically aware.

Cathy Lynn Preston

See Also Cultural Property; Deconstruction; Feminist Perspectives on Folklore Scholarship; Gender; Marxist Approach; Postmodernism.

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Culture Hero

The central figure in a myth or myth cycle whose story tells that he lived at the beginning of—or before—time, experienced extraordinary adventures and achievements, conquered or tamed environments for human use, gave life, provided the things needed to exist, and was responsible for the life designs that exist in cultures. Oedipus of Greece, Se'ehé of the Pima Native Americans, Cú Chulainn of Ireland, Manixi of New Guinea Highlands, and I'toi of the Papago, for example, are culture heroes.

Most scholars who have analyzed culture heroes have attempted either to discover the formulaic structure of the myth cycles or to interpret them as meaningful expressions of societal values, beliefs, and behaviors. In 1864, Johann Georg von Hahn published the earliest documented analysis of the formulaic pattern of culture hero myth cycles in the modern sense. Many mythologists since then—including Alfred Nutt, Otto Rank, Vladimir Propp, Joseph Campbell, Jan de Vries, and Clyde Kluckhohn—have applied the method to the study of culture heroes. Most of these studies have agreed that folk culture heroes are a very common part of myth traditions of the world. They have also noted that there are distinct similarities in the biographies of heroes from many cultures and that there are clearly detectable trends toward regularities in the narrative content and structures of culture hero myths. This research has proved that duplication, triplification, and quadruplication of elements, reinterpretation of borrowed narratives to fit preexisting cultural aesthetics, and endless variation upon central themes are constant structural tendencies of hero tales.

Structural mythologists advanced many other theories and descriptions as a result of their attempt to discover and explain the formulaic pattern of culture hero myth cycles. Lord Raglan's myth-ritual theory held that the worldwide monomyth—the culture hero narrative structural pattern—reflected a birth, initiation, and death ritual for an individual, possibly a royal personage, who also was considered the incarnation of a god. He also concluded that the similarities

of the cycles around the world proved culture heroes were not historical, that religious ritual was the source of all myths, and that, in turn, myths were the precursors of all other folklore.

Following the division in approaches developed in linguistics, Claude Lévi-Strauss argued for a structuralist approach to myth that sought to reveal culture hero stories' "deep" structure rather than their surface structures. He analyzed many myths from many cultures and found binary opposition underlying them all. He used his analyses to develop his theory that myth and mythic thought proceeded from an awareness of binary opposition toward their progressive mediation.

Joseph Campbell's popular books and lectures presented a simple, three-part summation of the pattern of culture hero myths: separation, initiation, and return. Campbell's pattern was a composite that drew single incidents from the lives of many heroes from multitudinous cultures in order to create a hypothetical monomyth.

Otto Rank applied the psychoanalytic approach to myth developed by Sigmund Freud and adapted by Carl Jung to the analysis of culture hero stories as a guide to understanding the unconscious mind. Clyde Kluckhohn supported psychoanalytical interpretations of culture hero stories that held that some themes and the linking of certain features of them exemplify a large number of ego defense mechanisms, and he provided supporting examples from his fieldwork with the Navajo. These mythologists, with the exception of Kluckhohn, based their varied theories upon library research rather than fieldwork and shared the methodology of structural analysis of culture hero texts.

R. R. Marett issued the first call in the modern era for research interpreting culture heroes as meaningful expressions of societal values, beliefs, and behaviors. In his 1914 presidential address to the Folk-Lore Society and in subsequent presentations, he argued that researchers had to understand and interpret oral folklore as a meaningful expression of a culture. His call was very much in keeping with the ideas and methods of the functional movement in anthropology. Two years later, Franz Boas published his seminal work *Tsimshian Mythology*, in which he emphasized the importance of fieldwork in order to understand folklore in general and myth in particular. Boas, however, attempted to use myths primarily to reconstruct the past of cultures rather than to understand how they function in the present. The first forty years of the twentieth century were, in retrospect, a golden age for the collection of culture hero stories and for attempts to interpret culture hero stories in terms of their meaning to the people who were their customary audience and performers. Many of Boas's students collected culture hero tales in their natural contexts, and some—most notably Ruth Benedict—used their data for understanding how the stories functioned in cultures.

Functionalism gained even more support in the 1950s when William Bascom presented his functional approach to folklore in his presidential address before

the American Folklore Society. By the 1990s, it had become a truism that culture hero stories function directly, indirectly, and inversely within cultures.

Many field research-oriented anthropologists and folklorists of the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s applied a functionalist approach to the study of culture heroes. Brian M. Du Toit collected a cycle of stories about a culture hero of the Gadsups of the New Guinea Highlands, recorded their performance and cultural context, and interpreted the stories as meaningful expressions in the culture of their audience and performers. Tomás ó Cathasaigh analyzed the concept of the hero in Irish myth and concluded that myths and their structures evince native ideology and explore a culture's concepts of the nature of men and the gods.

Many theories developed by the functionalist researchers who attempted to discover and understand the formulaic structure of culture hero myth cycles had few adherents in cultural studies by the 1990s, but the general conclusions they reached remained very important. Cultural studies of the 1990s, in general, accepted the later functionalist field studies that interpreted culture hero myths as meaningful expressions of societal values, beliefs, and behaviors. The most promising methodology for future folk culture hero research is a structural-functional approach uniting the study of lore with the study of the folk and the study of the past with the study of the present.

Keith Cunningham

See Also Hero/Heroine, Folk; Myth-Ritual Theory.

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Custom

An activity performed with such regularity that it is considered expected behavior or a part of social protocol. Simply put, custom is the traditional and expected way of doing things. Customs that assume the authority of unwritten law are called mores, and some customs and mores may become part of a written legal system.

Custom includes a vast aggregate of human behavior. Ethnographers regard customary actions as part of the daily routine in people's lives. Folklorists tend to

consider custom as a component of folk belief or folkways. Recent folklore studies generally do not deal with the national or broadly practiced ethnic customs but instead are restricted to collecting and analyzing customs maintained by discrete folk groups. For example, the agricultural customs practiced by the Pennsylvania Dutch or the occupational customs of Chicago firefighters are the type of customs that receive attention from folklorists. Moreover, recent folklore publications also indicate that folklorists who deal with custom focus their efforts on rural customs, religious customs, occupational customs, and children's play customs. More often than not, those studies that employ the term *folkways* refer exclusively to rural practices, especially those closely associated with agriculture and animal husbandry.

People learn customs and when to use them appropriately in a variety of ways. Sometimes, a knowledgeable member of the group tells the uninitiated or by action indicates what kind of behavior is expected in a particular situation. The family unit, for example, plays a major role in continuing customs by telling children when and how certain practices are expected in particular contexts.

Folklorists consider customs to fall into four major categories: (1) calendar customs (i.e., practices associated with certain dates or times of the year), (2) rites of passage customs (i.e., practices associated with pivotal moments in the human life cycle), (3) customs associated with significant communal events (i.e., festivals and other large group celebrations), and (4) customs linked to folk belief (i.e., practices that result from holding certain beliefs). Although these categories serve the academic purpose of cataloging, in actuality, rarely do they not overlap.

Calendar customs in the United States are less common than they are in Europe. Although most Americans celebrate calendar holidays, such as the Fourth of July or Thanksgiving, they may maintain regional and familial traditions that distinguish the way in which one group of people commemorates these holidays from the ways of other groups. Since the mid-nineteenth century, celebrating Thanksgiving has been a national custom, but rather than focus their attention on Thanksgiving as a national harvest celebration, folklorists research regional and family customs that develop as part of celebrating Thanksgiving. How special foods are prepared and served, who performs what activities associated with preparing and serving the meal, and even deciding when and where the meal is to be served are ruled by custom. The males in some extended families in Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, and upstate New York customarily spend Thanksgiving Day morning and early afternoon deer hunting while the women remain at home to prepare the traditional turkey meal. In some families, this hunt customarily marks the opportunity for younger children, in the company of their fathers, uncles, and older brothers, to go on their first hunt. Seldom are any animals shot this day, but the hunt and male bonding accompanying it manifest an important social dimension associated with Thanksgiving Day, and for some of the participants, the custom becomes a rite of passage.

The calendar offers various groups opportunities for practicing different customs. Ringing in the New Year may be replaced by shooting in the New Year among German and Italian Americans. Recently arrived ethnic groups such as the Vietnamese and Cambodians have introduced the celebration of Tet with its accompanying customs into American culture. Many Catholics continue to have their throats blessed on St. Blaise's Day, February 3.

Regional customs often mark the changing seasons. Vermonters customarily start their tomato and pepper plants indoors on or shortly after Town Meeting Day, the first Tuesday of March. Many Vermonters who tap maple trees for their sap customarily celebrate the beginning of a new sugaring season by using the first maple syrup for sugar-on-snow, which is customarily accompanied by dill pickles and plain doughnuts.

Some U.S. calendar customs, such as sending Father's Day and Mother's Day cards or passing out sweets and flowers on St. Valentine's Day, are supported more by commercial interests than by folk tradition.

Rites of passage serve to mark major transitions in the lives of individuals, and customs associated with them are important ways for folk groups to recognize the changes. From conception to death, folk groups have produced an enormous number of customs that measure the growth and development of its members. Deciding on the name of a child may be left up to the whim of parents, but in many cases, family or ethnic custom dictates that the parents follow the custom of naming the child after an ancestor or other relative. Customarily, the tooth fairy trades candy or money for the child's baby tooth when it falls out. Although this tradition may have had ancient roots in superstition, the custom as now practiced in most of the United States simply marks a stage in the physical transition into childhood, and it also promotes a safe and easy way for parents to dispose of an unneeded tooth. Peers may punch the arm of the birthday child, one punch for every year of age. Customs associated with courtship and marriage persist in the United States. Among some Mexican Americans, it is customary for a group of the young man's friends to visit the girl's family to ask permission for the courtship to begin. Decorating cars after a wedding and parading through the bride's and groom's neighborhoods while honking the car horn remain part of community and ethnic traditions. In parts of the southern and midwestern United States, the marriage celebration does not end until after the newlyweds' first night is disrupted with a surprise and customary shivaree. The bride and groom are expected to invite the nighttime revelers into their home and give them food and drink. Customs associated with dying and death are equally widespread. Some families consider it customary to stop their clocks to mark the time that someone in the house died. In parts of the South, pottery and medicine bottles decorate graves. A widespread practice that is held after the graveside ceremony is the meal to which the mourners are invited in order to celebrate life. In many places, it is customary for the survivors to maintain their relative's gravesite and to

Native ceremonial dancers at the Odawa Powwow in Canada. (Corel)



decorate it with flowers, candles, or other ornaments on the anniversary of the death and on particular calendar celebrations.

Folk festivals provide the opportunity for a large degree of community involvement. In the Scottish-American Highland games held annually in New Hampshire, descendants of Scottish families can celebrate their heritage. The women prepare the customary dishes of Scotland; the children, dressed in kilts, perform the Highland dances, and the men compete in games that test their strength. Folks in backwater communities of Louisiana celebrate Mardi Gras following old customs unlike those practiced in the massive, more commercialized Mardi Gras celebration in New Orleans. Among many Italian Americans, December 26 is visiting day. They customarily leave their front doors open, set out drinks on nearby tables, and arrange for viewing the gifts received on Christmas. Then they visit their neighbors' homes, calling on folks who themselves may be out making other visits. The custom provides the opportunity to show generosity to friends and to display signs of prosperity.

Festivals also provide a context in which to perform various customs. Native Americans gather for national powwows, at which they share, invigorate, and revitalize traditional, tribal, and newly created pan-Native American customs. Most state and national folk festivals are hybrid products of surging popular interest in folk traditions, especially folk music, storytelling, and crafts. Many of

these would not exist on the scale they do without federal and state support and without large, professionally oriented organizations behind them.

Certain customs are closely associated with folk belief, sometimes making it difficult—and perhaps unnecessary—to distinguish custom and ritual. But the custom and ritual, at least in the abstract, are different. Ritual is usually performed in order to affect the future. Custom, in the abstract, is practiced to influence the present. To break custom can bring criticism or censure from members in the folk community. The practice of dressing a male infant in blue and the female in pink, for instance, partly derives from a primitive European belief that blue protects infants from harm. Although the belief itself generally has died out in the United States, many Americans follow the practice because “that’s the way things are done.” Similarly, if the gender of an expected child is not known, baby gifts are bought in a neutral color—yellow or green. The origin of this custom is probably unknown to most of those who follow it, but custom demands that the practice be followed.

To avoid bad luck, some people customarily throw salt over the left shoulder after having accidentally knocked over a saltshaker. But when the original belief associated with the custom disappears, customary actions often continue to be practiced. These actions may be associated with new beliefs, or they may simply be practiced by habit. Many Americans may still knock on wood even though they do not know or believe in the Germanic belief behind the custom.

In the broadest sense, much of folklore is itself a part of custom because folklore is appropriate and often expected behavior in certain contexts. An ill person by custom seeks advice from the herb doctor; custom tells the Native American storyteller to wait until winter to tell certain tales; the singer frames the performance of a song with customary opening and closing formulas. Though remedies, tales, and songs are not necessarily considered customs, the practice of each may be decided by folk custom.

Material culture may also be directed by custom. Historically, custom dictated whether a chimney was built inside or outside the house or where outbuildings were located in relationship to the house. Custom may also limit the functional design for the interior of a house. For many years in the East and Midwest, lilac bushes were customarily planted in the front yards of country homes. Even the most modern styles of housing may reflect customary expectations as folk tastes adopt them to a certain way of life.

As folklorists look at folk traditions in the workplace, they discover a whole range of customs. Richard Dorson’s research among lumberjacks in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan discerned a code of behavior that prescribed a number of customs. For example, the jack, after spending months in the woods, was by custom expected never to walk away from a fight, to be courteous toward women, and to spend all of his wages on drinks for himself and his fellow lumberjacks. Lumberjacks also hold their own carnivals at which they customarily compete in

various games that demonstrate their logging skills. In other occupations, custom dictates a hierarchy—for example, new workers on an assembly line may be expected to do the unpleasant tasks. The customary coffee break provides both white- and blue-collar workers with a time for gossip, sharing stories, and playing practical jokes. In this context, too, new workers learn more about the social and work protocols expected of them.

Determining when a traditional craft should be undertaken also may be bound with custom. In some regions of the United States, it is a custom for a young girl to complete her first quilt—usually a doll-sized version—before reaching puberty. The finished quilt is stored in her hope chest until she marries, and eventually, it is used to bundle her first child.

Families may have their own customs, such as parents sitting at the head of the table or the youngest child opening the first gift on Christmas morning. Custom may dictate that the main meal on Sunday will be eaten in the early afternoon, although dinner meals throughout the rest of the week are eaten in the evening.

Richard Sweterlitsch

See Also Belief, Folk; Foodways; Holidays and Commemorations.

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Cyberculture

Cyberculture studies focus on the cultural origins and evolving legacies of computing technologies, and include the study of their related scientific, technological, and philosophical contexts. Cyberculture encompasses early automata and calculating machines, computing machines (those capable of manipulating data according to instruction), robotics (the science of complex machines), cybernetics (the science of complex systems), virtual environments (artificially generated, nonmaterial environments), the Internet, artificial intelligence (AI), and, at its broadest, the philosophical concept of “simulation.”

As an expression of the basic human drives for building and for navigation, cyberculture is closely tied to folklore, myth, and fiction. In *The Cybercultures Reader* (2000), Timothy Leary uses the term *cybernaut* to describe all engineers, architects, explorers, and cartographers in virtual and/or physical geographies, comparing the voyages of Renaissance explorer Marco Polo and fictional hero of Greek epic poetry Odysseus with the midnight activities of teenage hackers engrossed in online gaming. Such terminology captures a primary conflict that has characterized the development of cyberculture, one of particular importance to the student of folklore—a violent striation between the concerns of authoritative rule on the one hand and populist practice on the other. At the same time, stereotypical and hierarchized categories of “male” and “female,” “controller” and “machine,” and “creator” and “created,” have tended to be reduplicated in all areas to do with computing technologies, both in official discourse and in computing subcultures.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, published histories of early computing have largely championed the accomplishments of men. When female pioneers in the field are included, gender stereotypes detract from public perception of their contributions. The portrayal of computing progenitors Charles Babbage and Lady Ada (Byron) Lovelace speaks directly both to the perpetuation of gender stereotype in established histories and to cyberculture’s competing claims of authority and populism. Babbage’s Analytical Engine (1840) is widely cited as the first modern analog computer. Lady Lovelace constructed what has been described as the first computer program, a set of instructions for the Analytical Engine intended to be utilized in a manner similar to the cards of Jacquard’s loom. She also published *A Sketch of the Analytical Engine* (1845), a treatise describing in prophetic terms the potential use to which such a machine might be put. Officially, Babbage envisioned the Analytical Engine performing sophisticated astronomical calculations for the British Navy. However, Lady Lovelace envisioned the machine generating musical combinations, pieces of text, and other representational output.

The more colorful biographies also record the pair’s fondness for horse racing and speculate that the Analytical Engine’s calculating potential fuelled their dream of a reliable, predictive system of betting based on mathematical probabilities. Yet Lovelace’s significant contribution has been forgotten or seriously downplayed. While Babbage has been presented by computing historians as the authoritative inventor of the machine, the scientist interested in astronomy and naval procedure, and a risk taker intent on cracking the mathematics of random variables, Lovelace has been characterized as “Babbage’s muse,” as a “dreamer” predicting computer-driven art and music, and as an opium addict who lost a fortune “on the ponies.” Yet the Analytical Engine’s presumed transposition from naval research to entertainment (art, music, and horse racing) did foreshadow the

evolution of the computer in the twentieth century, as government-directed supercomputing gave way to the personal computer (PC) and brought the technology into the feminized realm of popular culture and mass consumption.

Advances in computing architectures and programming in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1990s retraced the mythic ambitions of the field's earlier pioneers: the creation of "life" and cheating fate. The military context of microcomputer development paradoxically bequeathed a legacy of secrecy and restriction while enabling the structures and devices that would grant access to this technology by the general populace. E-mail developed in the 1960s and 1970s from the need for U.S. Department of Defense personnel to communicate electronically. It soon filtered down through the military to academic institutions, although it would be decades still before it was available to Jane and John Doe on the street. Similarly, the Internet originated from ARPANET, the corporate communication network of Xerox PARC (Palo Alto Research Center) computer scientists. Downsized after military cutbacks at the end of the Cold War, PARC group scientists moved from military to corporate funding while vehemently retaining a 1960s counterculture ethic; they were responsible for key innovations that would bring about the widespread distribution of computer communication networks (today referred to as the "democratization of the 'Net'"). The established histories often describe the transition of computing from a military context to the realm of democratic practice through rhetoric of iconoclastic male heroes who rescued a passive, general population from governmental control or the perceived threat of AI. Science fiction firsts such as *Forbidden Planet* (1956) and the hugely successful television series *Buck Rogers* (1950) form unofficial parallels in popular culture to the official vision of these histories, both offering decidedly male-centered narratives.

At the same time, the science of cybernetics, theorized by Norbert Wiener in 1948, fundamentally reconceived of complex systems in ways that eschew ideas like "authoritative" and "centeredness" in favor of concepts such as "distributed" and "part function." Wiener generalized and expanded the concept of cybernetics to describe all complex systems of interacting parts, whether the human body, a building, or a computer network, and suggested that they be defined not by physical arrangement and boundaries, but through the processes of information flows. Similarly, in the late 1960s, a group of four architects using the name Archigram developed an "architecture of lightness," a mode of conceptualizing buildings as open to networks of communications technologies, and as portable—even disposable. The Microsoft Windows catchphrase, "Where do you want to go today?" nicely encapsulates what Archigram envisioned for cities of the future: people, machines, and buildings capable of roaming and linking up in various arrangements, at various times, in fluid relationships, and with fluid purposes. Such decenteredness and flexibility promised much for an egalitarian vision of computing technologies, in terms of both public usage and gender identity.

However, the dream of nomadically empowered populations has proven difficult to achieve, as current conflicts between proprietary software and corporate licensing on the one hand and public demand for free access and unlimited information upgrade on the other have inevitably resulted from the dual impulses that structured the late 1960s and early 1990s explosions in computing technologies. Such conflict reaches a popular apotheosis in the blockbuster film *The Matrix* (1999). Played out in terms that emphatically restate the symmetries between naval, architectural, physical, and virtual territories, the film stages an epic confrontation between authoritative control with Agent Smith, a sentient program or AI, and the iconoclastic hacker-hero Neo. Despite the liberatory potential envisioned in the very malleability of simulated worlds and digital relations, a masculinist rhetoric amenable to military and corporate warfare has reasserted itself in cybercultures with amazing resilience; the impulses of technological egalitarianism have not included women as a specific group.

Primary categories of cyberlore reveal aggressive gender polarizations: hacker culture and its mythologies center around the lone, teenage male; video games feature both militarized combat sequences and hypersexualized female avatars (on-screen player icons), playing, like hacker culture, to the teenage male audience; online shopping sites, although statistics attest to the generality of their demographic, are perceived as feminized “space” marked by excesses of consumption, frenzied bargain hunting, and purchase for leisure rather than necessity; chain e-mails, invariably of the “joy-luck” variety (“send to five friends; break the chain and misfortune will follow”), are overwhelmingly targeted at and distributed by women; and chat rooms have spawned activities with decidedly sexual content that are potentially dangerous spaces for women and children. As Nina Wakeford remarked, much of the Internet still functions as a “lawless wild west world,” controlled by “console cowboys” (Wakeford, 91).

Frontier justice, largely underpinned by conspiracy theory, has been described as the motivational calling card of self-styled techno-subversives—“hackers.” A hacker’s perception that authorities not only have complete, regulated control of network technologies but are withholding vital information from the populace, presents him or her with the irresistible challenge to infiltrate restricted databases and cause anarchic havoc. As Andrew Ross details, the media constructs teenage hacking as a threat to both corporate hegemony and national security, thereby perpetuating its romantic counterculture mythology; “the dominant representation of the hacker is that of ‘rebel with a modem’” (Ross, 256). Note that although it is aimed against institutional authority, hacking is still clearly regarded as a form of skilled combat. Moreover, cultural productions from news headlines to online humor confirm that hacker culture is clearly coded male.

Frequently linked in the popular imagination with hacking, video gaming, too, is perceived as a pastime for teenage males. Numerous games adopt militarized

scenarios, whether single player or MMPORG (massive multi-player online role-playing games) in design. The exaggeratedly masculine avatars of games like *Duke Nukem* and *Doom* are easily intelligible in this context, while the use of female avatars has generated considerable debate. Role-playing games, originating from early Dungeons and Dragons groups and online MUDs (multi-user dungeons, domains, or dimensions), appeared initially to offer considerable flexibility in character construction and ample opportunity to re-envision gender roles. However, as these games evolved into popular console versions and MMPORGs, commercial interests and user demand combined to produce fairly rigid generic protocols for gendered playable characters.

The video game character Lara Croft, adapted for the *Tomb Raider* films (2001, 2003), serves as a good example of the gender debate. While Lara takes on the role of action hero within the game and even combines masculine and feminine attributes in her hypergendered signature look of big breasts and guns, the sexualization of her character and its alignment with soft-core pornography is demonstrated by the fan lore that surrounds her. Lara fans have created entire backstories and supporting paraphernalia, including the infamous “nude Lara” patch, a modification that strips the avatar of her clothing. Combat-hardened video vixens like Lara may have come a long way from the passive prostitutes in *Duke Nukem* who beg, “Kill me, kill me,” but feminist critics argue that the difference is one of degree, not kind. The ease with which video games translate between militarized and pornographic scenarios is obvious in a game such as *Leisure Suit Larry*, in which the object of game play is to maneuver Larry into positions of sexual intercourse with several female characters—much like shooting down as many space invaders as possible—within a given time limit.

Online, women have grouped toward activities involving consumption and private or domestic communication, spaces already culturally coded as female, particularly online shopping malls, e-mail, and blogs (Web-published diaries). Online malls have consistently tailored site graphics and navigation designs to evoke physical shopping malls, with female-targeted items such as clothing, shoes, and purses in the most visibly noticeable locations, heavy usage of female models with the products, and female-oriented catchphrases such as “Discover the softer side of Sears.” Likewise, chain e-mails—one of the first Internet genres to capture the attention of folklorists—are mass-produced, but stealthily invade the space of private e-mail addresses. These e-mails promise love or good luck as a result of sending a copy of the letter to five or more friends within a designated time limit. While the address to “friends” encourages erasure of the border between the virtual, generic address and the recipients’ actual friends through the nature of their intended distribution, chain e-mail also functions, like the shopping mall, as public inscription of private space. Graphics included with such e-mails are often female-oriented and content-themed, with prominent displays of roses, babies, and

butterflies. The association of femininity with friendship, love, and the private sphere versus the warrior's code of video gaming and the publicity of lone-male hacking suggests just how stereotyped computing lore and practice remains.

Further, many commentators believe that the potential for virtual gender play that feminist critics had envisioned so positively in the heady first days of Internet expansion has been curtailed through both authoritative and populist mechanisms. The economic realities of niche marketing, from video games to the online auction mall eBay, have resulted in products and associated advertising that exaggerate gender stereotypes. Unofficial online practice has also reinforced rigid gender identity in many subcategories, from chat room humor that makes gender masquerade a staple comic subject to the use of e-mail and chat room space for pornography distribution. Certainly, cyberspace has offered women new access to public expression, with many sites dedicated to the publication of women's writing about women's concerns, along with online versions of feminist magazines like *Bitch*, which have a wider virtual than print readership. However, cybercultures have failed to bring gender-egalitarian principles to the mainstream, and have more easily translated standard gender roles from the physical world to the digital.

Andrea Austin

See Also Folklife; Internet; Urban Folklore.

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D

Dance, Folk

Concept of a specific type or repertoire of dances belonging to the folk, developed in the latter part of the eighteenth century, in close relation to the social, political, and economic development in western and central Europe. In other parts of the world, the notion of folk dance as distinct from other kinds of dance has been less common or even totally absent (as, for example, in parts of Africa and eastern Siberia). During the nineteenth and especially the twentieth centuries, the notion was exported to most parts of the world, with the result that it is now likely that one may find something called “folk dance” everywhere.

Common definitions of the concept usually rest on a combination of at least three criteria: (1) the social and/or geographical origin of the dances and/or the dancers; (2) the forms and types of dances and/or the ways of dancing; and (3) the ways, forms, and means of transmission of the dances. However, the term *folk dance* often is used in a more general and descriptive sense also as a generic label (in much the same way as, for example, the terms *ballet*, *jazz*, *rock*, and *latin* are used) for a large and varied repertoire of dances, practiced in organized forms by specially recruited and trained groups for the purpose of either recreation or stage performance.

A standard textbook definition, compiled from a list of the most commonly used criteria, might read: Folk dances are dances that belong to and represent a specific part of the lower strata of the population, usually the peasantry (or all the lower strata of the population or the entire population) of a culturally and/or geographically bounded region or nation; the dances being collectively and anonymously created and choreographed and passed on in tradition from generation to generation, orally or nonverbally, in nonwritten form, outside formal educational institutions. As a result, folk dances exist in many different variants and are performed by unself-conscious, nonprofessional dancers primarily for functional purposes (e.g., for magical or religious rites, ceremonies, and initiations or for the promotion of social cohesion or cultural identity).

To date, there is no generally accepted definition of folk dance, and it must be understood that such a definition, for logical and empirical as well as social and political reasons, is impossible to establish. Nevertheless, over the years, there have been many attempts to define the term, resulting in a growing confusion about the meaning and use of the concept. The confusion has a variety of causes. One obstacle is the many different usages of the word *folk*. Another is the idea that

folk dance is an authentic representation of an ancient heritage and cultural identity of a folk or a nation. This belief has led to a quest for typical and representative dances, and political rhetoric sometimes deliberately obscures the two different denotations of the word *typical* in this context (i.e., “the most commonly used” versus “the most characteristic and distinctive”). Furthermore, the idea of the folk as a homogeneous, culturally, and geographically bounded entity has encouraged a static view of folk dance and a neglect or even denial of local and regional variations, class differences, transcultural influences, processes of improvisation, innovation, creation, and change. This in turn has created a need among some scholars and performers to introduce a distinction between “unchanged,” “true,” or “authentic” folk dances (e.g., “folklore,” “folk dance in its first existence,” “survivals”) versus “changed,” “false,” or “unauthentic” folk dances (e.g., “folkish” or “folkloristic dances,” “folklorism,” “fakelore,” “folk dance in its second existence,” or “revival dances”).

The often uncritical and naive application of the specifically European folk concept of folk dance to non-European societies during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has led to further confusion and elicited severe criticism. As a result, a set of related terms has been introduced, such as *national dances* and *primitive dances*. These labels rose to prominence in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. *National dances* was not only a synonym for *European folk dances* but also applied to all forms and types of non-European dances; *primitive dances* was usually applied to dances in “primitive” societies, especially in Africa and Asia.

During the last decades of the twentieth century, a growing dissatisfaction with the term *folk dance* among scholars and performers led to the introduction of yet other terms, such as *traditional dance* (used to include also other orally transmitted forms, such as the Indian *kathak*), *popular dance* (modern ballroom recreational dances but also often including folk dance, especially in Great Britain), *ethnic dance* (a term introduced in the 1960s referring to the dances of minorities in multicultural societies, especially in the United States), and *vernacular dance* (introduced by the U.S. dance ethnologist Joann Kealiinohomoku to include jazz dance and other popular forms).

Like *folk dance*, most of these terms and concepts have been vaguely defined, usually by combining some or all of the criteria mentioned earlier. In practice, most of these terms have been used to describe more or less the same dance types or forms as were previously studied as folk dance. Often, these terms have been arranged, implicitly or explicitly, in an evolutionary hierarchy, from primitive dances through folk dances and popular (or social) dances to classical dances (the two middle categories may sometimes be reversed).

The difficulties in defining *folk dance* originate with the fact that many of the criteria ascribed to folk dance are contrastive and can only be understood in

relation to other forms of dance in specific historical contexts. In the history of folk dance, it is possible to identify at least three periods when such contrastive relations have stood out as especially important.

Crucial to most definitions is the notion that folk dance only exists in societies that also maintain art or classical dance forms. This idea can be traced back to the political and social situation in western and central Europe in the late eighteenth century. Introduced by German and French bourgeoisie intellectuals, the category “folk” intentionally was constructed in a distinct contrast to the ruling classes of post-feudal Europe. Thus, the theatrical and social dances of the cultivated few were understood to be new—individually created for aesthetic purposes by well-known, artistically self-conscious choreographers and dance masters. In contrast, folk dances were held to be old, collectively and anonymously created, and performed for functional purposes by unself-conscious peasants far from the towns and castles of the nobles. Whereas the dances of the nobles were perceived to be complex in structure and technically sophisticated—dances whose creation and performance demanded special training—folk dances were understood to be simpler, possessing natural dignity.

From this period stems the ambivalent discourse about folk dance as, on the one hand, uncultivated and therefore less valuable, and on the other hand, natural and therefore more valuable. This ambiguity has been a constant feature of the concept since the late eighteenth century. Also, the emphasis on the most rustic and ancient of the dances found among the rural classes, a constant feature in definitions of folk dance, can be explained as an intended contrast against the classical and aristocratic social dance forms of the time. We also can trace the ambiguity concerning who is to be considered “the folk” to this period. Though some argued that only the peasants could be taken into account, others maintained that other members of the population, such as workers, could also be classified as folk. Nevertheless, it remained self-evident for both sides that the noble classes had to be excluded.

The second important period in the history of folk dance was the late nineteenth century. Then, folk concepts (such as folk dance, folk music, folk costumes, and folklore) were again evoked by the European urban bourgeoisie, this time to contrast the music and dance forms of the modern industrialized society and the urban working class. In Hungary and other eastern European countries and in Germany, folk dance, folk music, and folk costumes became fashionable among young intellectuals as symbols of a national awakening and of a growing dissatisfaction with the cosmopolitan elite culture. In Sweden, students and intellectuals founded the first folk dance organizations, which propagated “authentic folk dances” on a massive scale, in order to fight what were considered to be the foreign and degenerative influences of modern, urban life on the ancient Swedish folk dance traditions. Around the turn of the twentieth century, similar organizations had been founded in most European countries.

Through this contrastive use, folk dance developed even stronger associations with the old as opposed to the modern, the peasantry as opposed to the urban working class, the native as opposed to the foreign, and the national as opposed to the international. As a result, an ideal model of the peasantry as the bearers of a distinctive and homogenous national culture was firmly established, a model that still is prominent in the field of folk dance today.

Before and immediately after World War II, folk dancing again became popular in western Europe and the United States, often as a means to promote regional or national cultural identity but also as a symbol of peace and feelings of international understanding. In San Francisco, New York, Amsterdam, Stockholm, and many other cities, so-called international folk dance clubs were established, where young urban people met to practice dances from different parts of the world, especially the British Isles, the Balkans, the Nordic countries, and Israel. Although some of the dances belonged to the traditional repertoire of these countries, others were new compositions in folk style, made specifically to meet the demands of these new organizations.

After World War II, folk dancing became very popular in the new socialist states in Eastern Europe. In Yugoslavia, a whole generation enrolled in amateur organizations to learn the folk dances of their new confederates. This movement, described as *folkloromanija* by the Serbian ethnochoreologist Olivera Mladenovic, had its counterparts in all socialist countries and was enthusiastically supported by the prevailing regimes as a means to instill new socialist national and cultural identity in the population. During this period, parts of the old romantic concept of folk merged with the socialist notion of “the people” to form a rather unique Eastern European definition of folk, which later came to influence the discourse about the folk and folk dance in many Western countries, as well as in the Third World.

The postwar interest in folk dance brought about the development of a class of highly stylized, typified, and formally representative national folk dances intended for stage use, together with certain types of events (international folklore festivals) at which such dances could be performed. To improve the standards of folk dancing, professional state folk dance and folk music ensembles were set up in all Eastern European socialist countries (e.g., the Kolo ensemble in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in 1948). These ensembles were modeled upon existing state ensembles in the Soviet Union (especially the Pyatnitskij and Moisejev ensembles), and sometimes they even were under the direct control of Soviet advisers. The creative mixing of old folk dance traditions with the organized forms of folk dance cultivated in the amateur associations, modern dance theater, and ballet gave rise to a new dance genre, which, under the name of folklore, was exported to Egypt, Sudan, Iraq, Mongolia, and many other countries in the Third World. Paradoxically, this very national, even nationalistic, genre today has become one of the most international dance genres in the world and probably the one that attracts the

biggest number of participants and audiences. Folk dance is an obligatory part of the national state inventory, even in countries where distinctions between classical or folk dances never existed (for example, Tanzania).

Therefore, a range of different usages and levels of meaning are stored in today's folk dance concept. As the concept became more polysemic and multivalent, it became easier to utilize—but also more difficult to define.

Research on Folk Dance

There are many noteworthy documents on dance and dancing by explorers, travelers, and ethnographers dating back many centuries (i.e., the famous Indian dance book *Bharata Natya Shastra*, from the first centuries CE), as well as some important studies by folklorists and musicologists from the last century. However, a genuinely systematic folk dance research began only in the first part of the twentieth century. In most parts of the world, dance research never has been an independent academic discipline. The bulk of dance studies have been carried out by European (most notably, Eastern European) and U.S. scholars trained in musicology, ethnomusicology, folklore, ethnology, anthropology, and related disciplines. Therefore, the theories and methods used in folk dance research have developed in close connection to these disciplines, and they have followed the same trends.

Over the years, folk dance scholars have pursued several goals simultaneously. There has been a profound difference between those scholars emphasizing structural aspects of the dance itself (forms, types, and structures) and those emphasizing dance in culture or “dance as culture” (functions and meanings of dance and dancing). There also have been crucial differences between the historically oriented research that developed in Europe, addressed questions of origin and distribution, and emphasized recording and documentation, on one hand, and the type of anthropologically and linguistically inspired research that has dominated in the United States, on the other. Although European scholars have tended to focus mainly upon the folk dance traditions of their own countries, many of the dance scholars in the United States have devoted more attention to dance among Native Americans or the peoples of Europe and Southeast Asia. As a result, much of the European folk dance research has tended to be, implicitly or explicitly, preconditioned and circumscribed by nationalist ideologies, and much of the U.S. research has tended to lack historical depth and to describe dance as mirroring other (and by implication, more important) aspects of culture.

Since the late 1960s, dance research has grown considerably in scope and in depth, both theoretically and methodologically. As a result, many of the differences between the European and the U.S. research traditions have been reduced, and important links have been built between the “danceologists” and “culturologists.” Although issues of forms, types, and structures of dances and dance as a cultural expression remain important, recent international economic, political,

and cultural changes have called forth new fields and questions. For example, small and cheap but technically advanced video cameras have made it possible to document and analyze not only dances but also entire dance events, which has led to a growing number of studies on improvisation, creation, and dancing as process. Continuing massive urbanization and large-scale migration from the poor regions of the world to the rich areas has led to a growing interest in the meanings and functions of dance among migrants in urban and multicultural societies. The creation and rapid, worldwide distribution of new forms and types of dancing, as well as contexts and reasons for dancing, has led to an interest in the roles of dance in transcultural processes and culture building at large.

Folk dance researchers today often call their subject “ethnochoreology,” “dance ethnology,” or “dance anthropology” (“anthropology of dance”), depending on their education, professional affiliation, and fields of interest. Although there are special national organizations for folk dance researchers in some countries (for example, in the Nordic countries), most ethnochoreologists and dance anthropologists are members of national and international anthropological, ethnological, and musicological scientific associations. This can be explained by close theoretical and methodological connections and also by the continuing strong personal connections between researchers in these fields.

Two major trends in modern dance studies that may arise from this situation can be identified. First, there is a strong tendency to give up the notion of “folk dance” for “dance,” to pass on from “folk dance research” to “dance studies”—which gives room for studies of all kinds of dance, in all parts of the world. Second, there is a tendency to extend the scope of interest from dance as an object to dancing as a process. Taken together, these tendencies imply a broadening of perspectives that may lead to a more general focus on dance as human expressive behavior.

Examples of Dance Research

For many reasons, it is impossible to survey the folk dances of the world except in the most general and abstract way. For example, an overview from the perspective of how the body is used would probably only reveal that there is a tendency to stress floor activity, legwork, and footwork in Europe, a tendency to stress hand, arm, and upper torso movements in Asia, and a tendency to use all the body, often polyrhythmically, in Africa. The meaningfulness of such an overview must be seriously questioned. An important reason for the difficulties involved in this type of study is, of course, the overwhelming variety of forms and types of folk dances, styles and ways of dancing, and occasions and reasons for dancing. Other reasons, as noted earlier, are the problems of definition regarding folk dance and the theoretically, methodologically, and empirically still rather limited scope and content of folk dance research. Though there are relatively many studies of folk

dance in Europe, especially Eastern Europe, there still are few from most other parts of the world. Even in Europe, the results of the research are often fragmentary, scattered, and difficult to compare and synthesize. Nevertheless, attempts at developing an overview have been made, the most notable and initially promising perhaps being Alan Lomax's grand-scale *choreometrics* project. The results, however, raise as many questions as the study attempts to answer.

A limited overview of existing folk dances in Europe today, however, is possible. Historical studies of folk dance in Europe have revealed the existence of several different layers of dance types and forms. The most ancient layer, surviving mainly as parts of old rituals and ceremonies, consists mainly of dances with a rather simple formal structure, which are performed collectively by large groups. There are, in addition, some more complicated solo dances with turns, skips, jumps, and movements imitating animals. The medieval layer consists mainly of collectively performed round dances and chain dances, and the Renaissance layer consists more of solo dances, dances performed with sticks and weapons. To the baroque layer belong a rich variety of group dances in squares and lines (*contredanse*, country dances), and during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, couple dances, such as the waltz, schottische, and polka, became popular in most parts of Europe. The twentieth-century layer is primarily composed of a large number of couple dances (e.g., foxtrot, one-step, tango, jive) and by a type that could be termed "mass solo dances" (in many countries, these are called "disco dances"), a new phenomenon in the Western world.



Folk dancers in City Council Square in the Old Town of Riga, Latvia, 2007. (Maigi/Dreamstime.com)

The folk dances in Europe also could be surveyed from a geographical perspective. In southeastern Europe, there is a predominance of chain dances and round dances (the Serbian *kolo*, Bulgarian *horo*, Greek *choros*, Rumanian *hora*), often led by a specially gifted dancer. In central Europe, couple dances of different kinds are predominant (*csardas*, polka, waltz); in northern and western Europe, both couple dances (schottische, polka, *polska*, waltz, *krakowjak*) and group dances of different kinds (chain dances, round dances, and “contra dances” in squares and lines) have been popular.

From a structural point of view, it may be noted that a very common pattern in European dances can be schematically written A-B-B 1 (a step, followed by a different step in the same direction, then the last step again but with reversed direction). This simple formula is known all over Europe and the Near East—from the Turkish *hasap*, the Romanian *sirba*, the *branle simple* of the medieval aristocracy, the dancing to ballad singing in the Faroe Islands, and the foxtrot of today’s dance restaurants. A structural analysis of a number of dances from Bulgaria and the former Yugoslavia demonstrates that many other and more complex dances, with longer motives and more phrases, are built on the same structural pattern as well. A similar structural analysis of Hungarian men’s dances, *legenyek*, by the Hungarian dance researchers György Martin and Ernő Pesovar, has revealed the existence of a kind of dance vocabulary, consisting of a large number of short formulas that are repeated and combined in different ways, according to certain structural rules. A subsequent structural analysis of chain dances in Europe by the Danish ethnochoreologist Lisbet Thorp has shown that most chain dances are constructed by combining a fairly small number of formulaic motives in different ways, according to a kind of “grammar.”

These and many other studies point to redundancy as a fundamental quality in folk dancing. The redundancy leads to a well-known phenomenon in the field of folk dance (as well as in other forms of folklore) that could be described by paraphrasing the English historian Peter Burke: The same dance is different, and different dances are the same. A dance may be differently performed at different occasions and by different dancers, yet it is considered as the same dance. Likewise, two dances can be made up almost entirely by the same set of motives or phrases and still be considered different.

Owen Ronström

See Also Choreometrics.

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Deathlore

Folklore relating to material objects, narratives, and beliefs about death. Deathlore includes, but is not limited to, funeral customs, afterlife beliefs, tombstones, angels, demons and gods relating to death, stories told about death, omens, and the Day of the Dead. Beliefs about death may differ based on age, religion, or ethnicity.

A few examples of material objects included in deathlore are: tombstones, roadside memorials, coffins, and cemeteries. Such objects are commonly noticed and universally related to death. These objects have changed throughout the years as humankind's beliefs and perceptions about death have altered. For example, cemeteries have changed a great deal since the mid-nineteenth century. Before this time, the word *cemetery* was not used and was instead replaced with burying grounds or graveyard. Additionally, the actual tombstones have changed with the transformation of beliefs. Tombstones began to focus more on hope and less on death by having engravings of angels rather than skulls. The epitaphs on the stone began to become more personal and conventional.

Narratives included in deathlore consist of songs, jokes, stories, and slang related to the idea of death. One song related to death is called *The Worms*. This ballad dates back to the nineteenth century and has hundreds of alternate versions that have developed throughout the years. Stories about death have been told in many different countries. These stories help the reader better understand a country's beliefs towards death. These stories may be witty, gruesome, or teach the reader a lesson. Slang related to death includes the phrase, "He is a goner." The



Tombstone with a skull and crossbones, belonging to Benjamin Parker, who died in 1769, in Boston's colonial Granary Cemetery. (Bambi L. Dingman/Dreamstime.com)

word *goner* is slang used to describe someone who has already died or a person expected to die soon.

Beliefs related to death include ideas and customs from many different cultures. For example, in Africa death is viewed as a journey and the funeral service is absolutely necessary to continue this journey. The funeral service and burial is so important that certain African cultures will even replace the body in order to properly mourn someone whose body is no longer intact or whose body is missing. The Luo of Kenya have been known to replace a missing body with the yago fruit found in their area. On the other hand, the oceanic cultures prefer to avoid death and actually deny its existence. In Australian indigenous cultures, the body is placed on a platform until the flesh decays. Then, the bones are collected and rituals are performed. Gods, angels and demons related to death are also common amongst many cultures.

Melissa Phillips

See Also Belief, Folk; Custom; Family Folklore.

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Deconstruction

The critical activity that attempts to subvert the idea that there can ever be closure in interpretation. This activity, whose formal origin is attributed to the French philosopher and literary critic Jacques Derrida, defies classification as a theoretical branch of poststructuralism due to its transitory and often playful rendering of its own construction, which continually reinterprets and redefines the function and form of the idea of deconstruction.

As an activity, deconstructionism subverts the meaning or the truth of an interpretation by revealing that which an interpretation must necessarily repress—conflicting and anomalous interpretations—in order to give the illusion of meaningfulness. In doing so, the deconstructionist grants an audience to the multiple meanings available for interpretation and thereby endlessly defers the anticipation of arriving at an ultimate conclusion. The deconstructionist, then, is generally skeptical of the traditional methods used in interpretation whereby closure is achieved. This is not to suggest that the deconstructionist views interpretation as meaningless; rather, the deconstructive activity presumes that interpretation is capable of infinite meaningfulness.

One of Derrida's most effective conceptual activities used in subverting the idea of closure is the anomalously spelled *différance*. This term plays on the French verbs for “to differ” and “to defer” by insinuating both of their meanings. In doing so, the term confronts Ferdinand de Saussure's notion that meaningful language depends on the recognition of distinctive signs by proposing that meaning must be infinitely deferred since the play of meaning goes on and on. In other words, meaning cannot be passed between minds through words since additional oppositional distinctions lie, for instance, on both sides of the original distinction that informs the transmitted sign, and these oppositional distinctions extend outward in a chain that lures the listener from the speaker's intended meaning.

In deconstructionism's desire to upset the traditional methods of interpretation, deconstructionist texts often prove difficult to read. This difficulty is not due to any inherent complexities of the activity, but it serves as another attack on the certainty upon which interpreters and their audiences traditionally have relied. Deconstructionism, continuing its attack on traditional interpretation, encourages a suspicion of all research and scholarship that has laid claim to a stable interpretive context for the research, for stability has little place in an activity that values continual rereadings.

Although there tend to be few folklorists who explicitly adopt the critical activity of deconstructionism (i.e., the rigorous inversion of the binary and a teasing out of the multiple meanings) in their scholarship and research, the idea that meaningful closure is illusory is being reflected in much of the discipline's current work. This reluctance to adopt a deconstructive activity is shared with many other academic disciplines as well, for the admission that terms such as *meaning* and *truth* are relative at best and fictive at worst undermines the perceived role of the educational institution and its efforts at interpretive analysis, critical investigations, transmission of knowledge, and, therefore, the institution's mission.

Charlie T. McCormick

See Also Cultural Studies; Postmodernism.

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Diachronic/Synchronic

Distinctive approaches to the study of language that have been extended to folklore studies. Ferdinand de Saussure sharply differentiated a diachronic (or historical) approach to the study of language, which views language as constantly dynamic, from a synchronic (or nonhistorical) approach, which perceives language in unchanging stasis at a particular point in its continual development. The distinction has entered the discourse of folklore studies in two ways.

When Claude Lévi-Strauss introduced his structural study of myth, he suggested that two ways of reading myth corresponded to *langue* (Saussure's synchronic approach) and *parole* (the diachronic approach). Interpreting myth diachronically resulted in a narration that presented the elements of myth in the non-reversible sequence demanded by the story chronology. For Lévi-Strauss, understanding myth synchronically meant that one should focus on recurrent patterns that appear at different points in the narration. Reading several instances of a recurrent pattern in relation to occurrences of other patterns allowed an understanding of how the myth reflected the tendency of the human mind to work toward mediated binary

opposition. Some folklorists and other students of narrative have used the term *syntagmatic* synonymously with *diachronic* and *paradigmatic* to equate with *synchronic*.

The distinction between the terms *diachronic* and *synchronic* has had more significant impact on folklore studies through their application to general methods of research and analysis. Diachronic approaches to folklore involve looking at particular genres or specific text types in terms that remove them from their performance context. These approaches (for example, the historic-geographic method) work toward constructing genre and text-type histories, but they do so by conceiving folklore as an artifact that can be isolated from its immediate contexts. Synchronic approaches, influenced by the ethnography of speaking introduced by Dell Hymes and John J. Gumperz, view folklore as text and/or process within a specific context that includes the immediate performance situation, the cultural background in which that situation occurs, and the psychosocial influences that have affected the participants (performers and audience) of the community.

Critics of diachronic approaches have argued that focusing on the historical or cross-cultural dynamism of texts without contexts makes folklore a lifeless entity, analogous to a collection of museum specimens. Critics of synchronic approaches have suggested that they lose what is distinctive in the study of folklore, substituting the methods and interpretive tools of ethnography and sociolinguistics for those that have developed within the history of folklore studies. The study of folklore becomes an examination of behavior rather than of the products of artistic creativity.

The gulf between diachronic and synchronic approaches to folklore study was wide in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s. Although the first generation of academically trained folklorists in the United States had defined folklore study in diachronic terms, many of their successors, whose manifesto was a special issue of the *Journal of American Folklore* published in 1971, advocated synchronic perspectives. That gulf persisted into the 1990s, but its significance for folklore studies lessened as some folklorists found ways of bridging it and as new concerns in folklore study emerged.

William M. Clements

See Also Paradigmatic/Syntagmatic.

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Dialogism

The term used by late twentieth-century scholars to describe Mikhail M. Bakhtin's (1895–1975) epistemology of mutually influencing relations among entities. Bakhtin himself employed the term *dialogue* (also *dialogization*). Dialogue served as Bakhtin's master metaphor in a semiotic “architectonics” (i.e., in Michael Holquist's terms, a “science of relations”) that emphasized the concepts of emergence, relativity, tension, selection, and value. To Bakhtin, no entity had meaning in isolation. There are three basic aspects of this assertion. First, in conversational dialogue (Bakhtin's simplest framing of the term), utterances respond to one another and thereby take on meaning relative to one another. Somewhat analogously in epistemological dialogue, any entity (e.g., the human self, a literary character or author, an interpretive strategy, an ideology) acquires meaning only in terms of its interaction with other entities (other human selves, literary texts). This interaction may occur between entities of like kind (e.g., one character in a text in light of other characters in the same text) or between entities of different kinds (e.g., a character's identity relative to the author's identity or the tenets of an ideology relative to the *chronotope* [i.e., the circumstances of time and space and the sociocultural contexts implied thereby] in which that ideology developed). Second, dialogue is mutually influencing to the entities involved. Thus, not only does an entity A take on significance in relation to entities B and C, for example, but *simultaneously* B and C also acquire meaning relative to their interaction with A. Third, meaning also depends on the particular power relationships obtained among the entities. In other words, meaning arises within and exists in tension. It emerges in dialogue among *different* entities, each of which has its own viewpoint to promote. In a dialogic relationship, meanings may, for example, be altered, deleted, conjoined, or substituted as each particular viewpoint or “voice” struggles for dominance.

Any dialogue involves interaction among a multiplicity of voices operating simultaneously on several different levels—that is, in the condition Bakhtin termed *heteroglossia*. In any act of meaning making, participants must choose

which voices-in-dialogue to heed. Thus, meaning is the result of the value-based action (i.e., choice or “authorship”) of its participants and not simply of the participants’ perception. The quality of “novelness,” which in literature is demonstrated most strongly in the genre of the novel, is that condition of human perception that is most sensitive to heteroglossia.

Because meaning is always positional (i.e., emergent within a situation of relationships), no single viewpoint can ever *validly* claim or completely maintain absolute, unitary authority (i.e., the perspective Bakhtin termed *monologism*). Confrontation with the Other will always arise because response to the Other is intrinsic to the development of meaning. Bakhtin used the term *carnival* to refer not only to a type of medieval festival but also to any popularly based situation of fluidity that challenges the stasis of authoritative, official (i.e., monologic) culture. In carnival, novelness is most potently symbolized in the *grotesque body*—the body of extensions, apertures, and effluvia that is constantly open to the Other and thus constantly in the act of becoming.

An example of a dialogic work in folkloric studies is Patricia Sawin’s *Listening for a Life: A Dialogic Ethnography of Bessie Eldreth*. Sawin explains that the book is not a biography or a life history but rather an “ethnography of subject formation that understands the creation of a self as a recursive and dialogic process.” A resident of the rural mountains of North Carolina, Eldreth does not fit the stereotype of the female Appalachian informant. For one thing, her song repertoire and practice link her more to the national, commercial spread of early country music than to the Appalachian ballad tradition. Sawin found that roughly three-quarters of Eldreth’s song repertoire was composed by commercial songwriters between the middle of the nineteenth and the middle of the twentieth centuries. And of that group, at least half were country music hits of the 1920s through the 1940s. Eldreth’s song repertoire demonstrates, therefore, that people in the southern mountains had never been as isolated from American popular culture as ballad collectors had wanted to believe. Sawin comments on the likelihood that Eldreth acquired much of her song repertoire from records or radio broadcasts by popular commercial performers. Yet Eldreth seems not to remember or at least does not mention singers’ names or does not talk about listening to the radio at all. This has implications for Eldreth’s dialogic relationship to Sawin as an ethnographer. Sawin speculates that Eldreth is responding to a perception that folklorists tend to place greater value on songs learned orally. Has Eldreth then been influenced by the folklorists she has worked with, Sawin asks, such that dialogically, she has neglected to attribute songs to recording artists because “she understood that folklorists are interested in unattributable songs?” Sawin leaves this as a rhetorical question, as one among other tantalizing explanations as to how Eldreth has structured her song repertoire over the years.

In addition to considering how Sawin constructs Eldreth as the subject of ethnography, Sawin concentrates on exploring how Eldreth constitutes herself as a subject

“by means of the various communicative resources available to her.” Prominent among these resources are her songs. In singing songs that comment on love and marriage, Eldreth sometimes “talks back” to a song, dialogically countering the song’s words with their opposite to express her feelings about her problematic forty-seven year marriage to her husband Ed. Years after his death, in admitting to her previous submission to him but now in celebrating her independence from him, she uses this technique of talking back. She sings lines of a 1950s deserted-lover song, “Making Believe,” and then speaks of her present-time reality:

Though I am so lonely [speaks: *No, I’m not*]
 I know not what to do, dear [laughs in her singing voice, then speaks:
Yes, I do]

 We had our little quarrels [speaks: *Big ‘uns, too*]

Sawin adds that many of Eldreth’s forms of self-expression (her ghost stories, practical jokes, use of reported speech, and playful talking back to romantic songs) appear to have been developed as means of dialogically “contesting the specific forms of male dominance she experienced in a loveless marriage to a shiftless man.” Sawin explores this theme by analyzing how Eldreth engages in dialogic self-construction, creating an identity through communicative interaction with others and with herself.

Danielle M. Roemer

See Also Carnival.

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Diffusion

Diffusion is the process by which aspects of culture, including folklore, spread from one society to another. Formerly, diffusion could be thought of as either direct or indirect. Direct diffusion required that societies be geographically contiguous.

Their shared frontier afforded the point of interchange for the movement of folklore from one to the other through the often-routine firsthand contact between members of two neighboring societies. Indirect diffusion occurred through an intermediary. A commercial traveler might hear folktales, for example, as he did business with members of a group of people. He could retell those folktales to another group who were not necessarily neighbors of the source of the stories. The power of the mass media, though, has probably made most, if not all, diffusion direct. Television programs, video and audio recordings, and the Internet have effectively made everyone neighbors—at least as far as communication is concerned. An urban legend originating in Mexico may now make its way directly through e-mail, chat rooms, and Web sites to people in Spain or the Philippines.

Diffusion, direct or indirect, has provided for folklorists one answer to the problem of multiple occurrence: Why is it, folklorists and their predecessors in philology and mythography have asked, that the same or similar folklore appears cross-culturally? Specific folklore items such as “Cinderella” (AT 510A) or general formulas such as the hero pattern have been recorded in a diversity of cultures, some of which have no obvious historical connections. Diffusionists have suggested that those historical connections do indeed exist and particularly that specific folklore items and sometimes even general formulas originated at one place at one point in time and spread elsewhere at frontiers (direct diffusion) or along trade and other travel routes (indirect diffusion). Extremists have argued that cultural similarities always result from diffusion and that, in fact, similar folklore proves that societies have had historical contact. Franz Boas endorsed this argument for the Native groups of the Pacific Coast of North America, for example. Some students of dialect vocabulary usages and of material culture forms have advocated similar ideas for other parts of the world.

Some diffusionists have identified certain times and places as particular fonts of certain folklore traditions. For example, during the nineteenth century, Theodor Benfey—influenced by the valuation placed on Sanskrit as the forerunner of many Indo-European (or Aryan) languages—proposed that India was the source of much European folklore, particularly narratives. Other diffusionists, not so monolithic in their views, focus on particular genres or particular stories and songs. The historic-geographic method of the Finnish school—so called because it was developed by the pioneer Finnish folklorist Kaarle Krohn—has attempted to trace the routes of diffusion, especially of folktales. The goals of the method have been to locate a precise time and place of origin of a story such as the “Kind and Unkind Girls” (AT 480), define geographically and historically the directions in which it spread, and place and date localized forms of the folktale (oikotypes). Some historic-geographic studies of particular folktales have tended to stress a superorganic view—that is, they imply that a folktale spreads on its own in a way that metaphorically resembles the rings that spread out from a stone dropped into a pool of water. The Swedish

folklorist C. W. von Sydow, though, forcefully pointed out that the dissemination of folklore depends on individuals—particularly persons who can effectively sing songs and tell stories. These active bearers of tradition (*traditors*) were necessary if a folktale or any other kind of folklore were to spread by means of diffusion. That process might move along much more irregularly than the rings-of-water metaphor suggested. Another critique of the Finnish school’s methodology pointed out that the presence of written and especially printed versions of folklore materials tended to skew their findings. This caveat inspired the American folklorist Stith Thompson to undertake a historic-geographic study under “laboratory” conditions. “The Star Husband Tale,” known by many Native North Americans, had spread entirely by word of mouth until folklorists, linguists, and anthropologists began to record and publish versions of it in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Perhaps the most important product of the historic-geographic method of folktale study was the publication of *The Types of the Folktale* by Finnish folklorist Antti Aarne in 1910 (revised by Stith Thompson in 1928 and again in 1964, and by Hans-Jörg Uther in 2004). An assumption underlying this index is that all folktale *texts* that can be subsumed under the same *type* number—for example, every story that follows the plotline familiar to many in Western audiences as “Rumplestilzchen” (AT 500)—stem from the same source and are interrelated by the process of diffusion.

For proponents of the historic-geographic method, identifying the particulars of the diffusion of a specific tale type was often an end in itself. Though folklorists still study the process of diffusion, they are now more interested in what that process reveals about the creative contributions of each *traditor* in the chain of transmission. Since purely oral transmission prevents a text from being “frozen” in a particular form, every performer—storyteller, singer, riddler, quilt maker—transforms what he or she has heard or seen. Such transformations result not only in deletions from what the performer encounters (despite the implications of the “devolutionary premise” in folklore studies) but in additions and substitutions as well. Performers may inadvertently make changes when they mishear or misunderstand what they have heard, or they may consciously alter the received material to suit the needs of localization and rationalization. They may bowdlerize material they deem inappropriate for performance, and they may attach explicit morals to ensure that their audience understands the ethical implications they mean to convey.

The American ballad scholar Phillips Barry suggested that the process of ballad composition might be termed “communal recreation”—each singer in each performance of a narrative folksong reconfiguring the song to reflect the exigencies of the specific performance situation and the general cultural and psychological contexts. For Barry—and for most folklorists today—diffusion is a creative process, as each performer reshapes what he or she has heard (and perhaps performed previously) to fit specific performance situations.

North Carolina colony-born half-Cherokee Sequoyah originated the Cherokee alphabet in 1821, thereby helping thousands of American Indians to become literate.
(Library of Congress)



Though the distinction between direct and indirect diffusion has lost much of its value in the face of globalization, some subtypes of diffusion remain valuable constructs. Anthropologists have identified, for instance, a process called “stimulus diffusion.” This occurs when a society encounters something in another group’s culture that stimulates the creation of a similar cultural development in their own. The classic example is the invention of the Cherokee syllabary by Sequoyah (George Guess), stimulated apparently by his observation of the use of the English alphabet as a way of more or less permanently recording words and ideas. Another specific form of diffusion is acculturation, usually referring to diffusion that occurs between societies that are unequal economically, politically, and/or militarily. Acculturation occurs when cultural forms pass from a dominant society to a subordinate society. In this sense, the adoption of Hindi words like *pajamas* and *bungalow* into English represents diffusion, while the use of English by Hindi speakers exemplifies acculturation.

Though diffusion has been occurring between societies throughout human history, it has rarely if ever been a smooth process in which new ideas from outside find automatic acceptance. Particularly in situations of acculturation, diffusion may result in defensive responses. Such processes include every aspect of culture in every society—including the most past-oriented folklore—reflecting the results of cultural merging generated by diffusion.

William M. Clements

See Also Folktale; Historic-Geographic Method; Oikotype/Oicotype; Performance; Worldview.

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Dilemma Tales

A narrative verbal puzzle (Motifs H620, “The unsolved problem: enigmatic ending of tale,” and Z16, “Tales ending with a question”). Presenting a dilemma tale to an audience constitutes a synthesis between riddling and narrating activities. These two broad attributes of the genre may be clarified further. With reference to riddling, the dilemma tale belongs to the category of the “puzzle” in which emphasis in solving the problem is placed on the riddlee’s own abilities (such as intellectual or motor skills); in this respect, a puzzle differs from a “true riddle,” in which emphasis is on the riddle’s structure and contents that contain clues to the camouflaged answer. As for the narrative component, the dilemma tale is typically a traditional “fantasy” prose narrative, told with the intent of entertaining or instructing and training; although some dilemma tales may contain a historical or belief component, they seem not to be narrated as legends or belief narratives.

A dilemma tale differs from similar non-dilemma tales that incorporate true riddles or puzzles as part of the plot; in this category, the tale’s characters (*dramatis personae*) may debate among themselves and offer answers, but members of the audience are not required to participate, and they remain spectators (e.g., AT 851, “The Princess Who Cannot Solve the Riddle”; AT 875A, “Girl’s Riddling Answer Betrays a Theft”; and AT 1579, “Carrying Wolf, Goat, and Cabbage across Stream”). By contrast, in the dilemma tale situation, the audience is required to take part by offering answers to the problem the tale poses. The various and often conflicting solutions offered by members of the audience (each acting in dual roles as listener to the tale and as riddlee) reflect the personal viewpoints of the members proposing them; also, the answers would be based on the cultural norms (*mores*,

folkways, laws). Consequently, the community's value system becomes a subject for debates and reevaluations. For example, a tale that appears as an African dilemma (AT 653A, "The Rarest Thing in the World") poses a situation in which three brothers, each using a precious commodity or service in resuscitating a girl, asks the question, To whom does she belong? Typically, the means utilized are information, transportation, and treatment; these may be viewed as aspects of the economic or a related culture institution whose worth will be debated.

Most of the dilemmas posed constitute decision making ("Choices," Motifs J200-J499); meanwhile, the puzzles posed belong to themes addressed under other motifs (Motifs H630, "Riddles of the superlative," and H660, "Riddles of comparison").

Although the dilemma tale has been reported from various parts of the world, its strongest presence is in sub-Saharan Africa, especially the western and central regions. Since many African dilemma tales also are known throughout the world as non-dilemma tales, the occurrence of these narratives in the northern and eastern regions of Africa (in Arab, Berber, and adjacent areas) poses an interesting problem. In view of the close geographic and historical contacts between the two portions of Africa, two arguments may be advanced: (1) The northern Africans borrowed dilemma tales from the south and provided stable answers for them, thus converting them into non-dilemma tales, or (2) the sub-Saharan groups took non-dilemma tales from the north and omitted the concluding episodes that rest on value systems different from their own, thus converting them into dilemma tales. A third argument is that both traditions developed totally independently.

Hasan El-Shamy

See Also Enigma, Folk; Folktale.

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Discourse Analysis

The study of language in social interaction. A branch of sociolinguistics, discourse analysis offers insights into daily processes of expressive behavior and interaction. By accounting for minute features of conversation, the field provides a means of examining folklore as part of a unified communicative system.

Discourse analysis developed as a refinement of descriptive linguistics. Like sociolinguistics, it proceeds from the observation of what language accomplishes (i.e., its functions), discovering the structures and means by which that accomplishment takes place. Discourse analysis focuses in particular on the moment of interaction, be it face-to-face or transmitted by mass media.

Folklorists have made ready use of discourse analytical methods. Annikki Kaivola-Bregenhøj draws on studies of comprehension and memory to discuss the ways in which a single narrator remembers and performs his or her repertoire. Gary Butler similarly draws on insights into conversational roles and communicative function to shed light on such familiar genres as proverb and memorate. Deborah Tannen explores conversational style as expressive behavior. Discourse analytical frameworks deepen folkloristic understandings of performance.

Discourse analysts themselves have undertaken studies of interest to folklorists. The field is characterized by an interest in socially relevant topics. Volume 4 of the *Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, for instance, offers examinations of such phenomena as gendered speech and the social use of xenophobic urban legends. Doctor-patient and politician-constituent relations form the focus of other discourse-analytical works. Such studies enrich understandings of communication and its role in social life.

A number of ethnographers have adopted discourse-analytical frameworks for addressing social issues. Conflicts between Native American modes of communication and those of Anglo schoolteachers are explored by Susan Philips. Group conflict and its resolution have been studied in ethnographies of Pacific societies.

With its descriptive apparatus and theoretical significance, discourse analysis demonstrates the tremendous expressive content of daily interaction and life.

Thomas A. DuBois

See Also Linguistic Approach.

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Dite

A statement that implies but does not recount a narrative. C. W. von Sydow coined the term *dite* in 1937 to help classify a broad body of materials grouped as *Sagn* (a concept comprising both narrative and non-narrative statements of folk belief). He defined it as “what people have to say about one thing or another without characterizing that which is said as true or false, believed in or fictitious.”

He divided this concept into two subcategories: (1) the *affirmate*, a statement that points out a generalized fact (“In that place, a light has been seen”), and (2) the *consiliate*, a precept that asserts what should or should not be done in a given case (“One should spit three times when a cat runs across the road”). Sydow also characterized whimsical or fanciful dites as *ficts*, expressions that have no basis in truth (such as “that stone will spin round whenever it catches the smell of newly baked bread”).

In Anglo-American taxonomies, many of Sydow’s dites would be termed *proverbs* or *superstitions*. But Sydow intended the term *dites* to contrast with *memorates* and *fabulates*, these being fully developed narratives that tell exactly what happened in a given instance. The dite may be a summary of a given narrative, he noted, or a dite may inspire an informant to expand it into a narrative.

For this reason, many scholars have seen such brief texts as types of legend. Susan Kalcik, for instance, found “kernel narratives” told in conversational contexts in which those present were familiar with the full story. Such “metonyms” (as condensed, allusive narratives also are called) still function as complete, finished performances in context. Linda Dégh argued that “the legend text” itself consists of *all* elements, fully narrated or not, as long as they form part of a contentious conversational dynamic.

But some dites express beliefs that are *never* narrated. Sylvia Grider described the common claim that Halloween sadists put razor blades in trick-or-treat goodies as a “legend” but never found it related in the form of a story. Similarly, John Widdowson studied verbal threats that control children’s behavior by invoking evil (often supernatural) entities as completed linguistic performances, not summary narratives. In such cases, the term *dite* may be appropriate and useful. Likewise, the term *fict* accurately characterizes the widespread whimsical

claim (rarely corroborated by experience) that certain statues on college campuses move or otherwise respond when a virgin passes.

The dite concept, however, assumes that we agree on how much plot constitutes a narrative. Robert Georges observed that many brief texts in context could equally be considered legend or belief statements. The distinction between legend and dite is often fuzzy, and so the latter is best understood as a term describing form rather than defining genre—a dite has the potential to be a narrative, but *in its present form*, the full story is left unexpressed.

Bill Ellis

See Also Belief, Folk; Belief Tale; Legend.

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Divination

Intuitive, revealed, and inspired knowledge obtained through the use of diverse methods, techniques, tools, and devices, eliciting the nature of time and events, the path of human life and destiny, and the unfolding of a meaningful cosmos. A general term, *divination* (from the Latin *divinus*, meaning “one inspired by the gods” or “soothsayer”) refers to the culturally encoded processes of extraordinary human insight arising spontaneously from intuition and reflection or through the extra-human agency of inspiration and prophecy by indwelling spirits and the direction of deities. Divination entails perspectives on time and space spanning regression into the past and foreknowledge of the future. Another related term, the *mantic arts* (from the Greek *mantis*, meaning “prophet”) is often used to refer to the range of techniques and methods that form systems of divination, from the systematic interpretation of the personal and idiosyncratic to the perception of meaningful patterns in the natural world and the cosmos. Many types of divination have been named by the suffix *mancy*, (e.g., oneiromancy, hydromancy, and geomancy), identifying their status as disciplines that engender inspired and prophetic activity. Divination is a subject of interest within the study of folklore and folklife because it is a realm of human experience that is virtually always initially

expressed and practiced orally, even though it is often later recorded in writing, in art and architecture, and in the material culture of domestic space. Divination is also equally folkloristic in that it is universally a folk practice, embraced by the common people and expressing their concerns, as well as an elite, empowered, hierarchically privileged practice of rulers, aristocracies, and professional adepts.

Since its historical range is enormous, its cultural and linguistic expression complex, and its range of tools and techniques bewilderingly diverse, divination may be best categorized along phenomenological lines. Such an approach facilitates cross-cultural and diachronic comparison and analysis. The following phenomenological categories, therefore, are offered as a comprehensive listing not of particular manifestations of divination but of types of divinatory experience.

Personal visionary and auditory experiences form a wide range of divinatory media, particularly dreams (or oneiromancy) and conscious presentiments, such as second sight, visions, soothsaying, psychic awareness, and extrasensory perception (or ESP). The mediation of knowledge communicated by the world of spirits is another important arena of divination, especially when communicated by the spirits of the dead as in necromancy, shamanism, séance, and channeling. These inspired communications can be transmitted in various ways: by indwelling spirits, gods, and the powers of nature both during and after possession and mediumship, as in speaking in tongues (or glossolalia); by prophecy via direct divine inspiration as found within Judeo-Christian-Islamic scriptures, the Zoroastrian Avesta, the Hindu Vedas and Upanishads, and so forth; by the wisdom literature embodied in the Greek and Chaldean theurgic oracles; and by other mythopoeic oracles such as archives of interpretive verses in West African and Afro-Caribbean Ifa divination.

The principle of meaningful chance and the importance of randomization are central to many divining systems. Thus, the perception and interpretation of signs or omens of luck, fate, or meaningful chance are represented in divination by lots (or sortilege, also called cleromancy); divination by the flight of arrows or the casting of arrowheads; divination by the use of mirrors; or divination by games of chance such as dice (or lithomancy). The meaningful randomization of numeric and symbolic forms together is central to several interrelated families of divining systems, including alphabetic and numeric correspondence and the creative and cosmogonic power of numbers known as numerology, as in the medieval systems that continue into modernity of Jewish *gematriya* and Islamic *jafr*, inspired by the Pythagorean and neoPythagorean numerology of late antiquity. Related is the practice of name reading (or onomancy) and various types of name magic that calculate the numerical values of the letters in names and interpret their effect (for good or ill) on the life path or destiny of the individual so named. Other systems based upon meaningful chance (or randomization) of numbers and pictorial symbols usually combine with narrative or poetic traditions of interpretation.



Srid pa ho (Divination Chart). Tibetan astrology depicts the signs and symbols of the universe in this traditional format, possibly introduced from China as early as the seventh century and popular in Tibet since the seventeenth century. The central figure is a large golden tortoise, representing the Bodhisattva of Knowledge, upon whom are drawn various geomantic diagrams, such as the nine magic squares and symbols of the eight planets. This type of Thangka is often hung in homes for protection and displayed for special occasions. (Library of Congress)

These ideographic and pictographic systems are exemplified by the relationship of numeric and pictorial images as in the tarot and other types of card reading and their traditional narrative interpretation; the relationship of alphabetic symbols and oral traditional lore in the casting of runes; the I Ching hexagrams formed by the fall of coins or yarrow stalks and their traditional narrative corpus of interpretation in the Book of Change; and the figures of Ifa formed by the numerological sequence of the casting of palm nuts or divining shells and their mythopoeic archive of interpretive Ifa verses.

Divination systems that concentrate on meaningful patterns in the relationship between earth and all heavenly bodies include the diverse historical and cultural expressions of astronomy and astrology worldwide (Babylonian- Chaldean, Hindu, Chinese, Mayan, Greco-Roman, Islamic, and European), much of which survives recombined in modern practice. Astronomy and astrology were considered twin disciplines in medieval thought, both Islamic and European. Astronomy was based on acute physical and mechanical observation of the heavenly bodies and the mathematical calculation of their regular movements. These measurements were accompanied by the complex systems of associative significance encoded by astrology. Astrology's aim was to discover the essence of universal harmony that lay in the relations between the spheres. This harmony of solids and motion was seen in the revolutions of the spheres (spherical bodies moving in what was then believed to be circular patterns). Thus, metaphysical speculations on the cosmic

significance of number and practical calculations and observations required for advanced astronomy went hand in hand. Astrology is a symbolic system that has blended easily with other systems of belief and practice since late antiquity. The combinations produced, among others, astrological medicine; astrological divination, as in geomancy; astrologically grounded alchemy; and other astrological magical practices, such as astrological talismanry. Astrology charts and analyzes the meaningful patterns of structure in the heavens, that is, the constellations that form the signs of the zodiac, the spatial relationships of heaven and earth that form the houses of the zodiac, and the changing interrelationship of transiting planetary and luminous bodies with each other over time that form the ongoing process of cosmic history. The particular nature and “influence” of the heavens upon the earth can be read as a portrait of the life path of each individual (natal astrology), the meaning and outcome of particular events in time and space (horary astrology), and the unfolding of the life course of rulers, governments, and nations in history (judicial astrology). Thus, astrology as a system of divination is formed of two interrelated activities: (1) the casting of a chart of any one of the relationships mentioned earlier through mathematical and astronomical calculation, and (2) the intuitive, inspired, and revealed process of narrative interpretation of the chart’s significance in relation to a particular question (whether it be the destiny of a person according to date and time of birth, the meaning of a particular event, the timing of a life passage, the beginning or ending of some enterprise, or the guiding of the ship of state and interactions between nations and governments).

Many other divining systems rely upon the structuring and interpretation of patterns of meaning in the earth, as encoded in its topography, its weather formations, and its natural forces and objects. Various systems of earth divination, known as geomancy, survive in living practice. For example, within the Islamic world, there are diverse practices within the larger science of Islamic geomancy, *ilm al-raml* (the science of the sand), and the divination of micro- and macrocosm represented by Chinese geomancy, *feng-shui* (divination by “wind and water”), continues in both the East and where it has been transplanted in the West. Divining the earth has often been specialized into various elemental subspecialties (according to the Greeks, the basic elements out of which all existence substance is composed are earth, water, fire, and air). Divining the presence of minerals in the earth or water or other objects is known in European and North American cultures as hydromancy, or cultivating visions in pools or surfaces of water (an activity long religiously associated with spiritual questing and interior reflection), and pyromancy, or seeing visions within candle flames or firelight have, since ancient times, been means used in diverse cultures for inspiration by the higher mind, by the gods, and by the elemental spirits of nature. Other expressions of elemental divination must include crystal gazing and stone reading, that is, seeing visions within spherical, ovoid, or other shapes of clear, colored, or reflective stones.

Stone reading, allied with the magical and medical use of crystals, gemstones, and minerals in Greco-Roman antiquity, became widespread in the late medieval and Renaissance West and continues in modern times. Crystal gazing usually involves use of clear and translucent colored quartzes; diamonds and other translucent gemstones (such as emerald, beryl, ruby, sapphire, and topaz); opaque and mirrorlike stones and gems (such as polished hematite, black obsidian, jet, and black onyx); or opalescent and reflective stones, frequently in spherical or semi-spherical shapes or cut as cabochon jewelry (such as varieties of agates, moonstone, rainbow and golden obsidian, tiger's eye and cat's eye, and opals). The interior reflection and mirrorlike intensity of stone reading and crystal gazing are direct parallels to the guided searching of mirrored surfaces of water described earlier. Related to this type of earth divination is the reading of meaningful patterns in natural materials such as tea leaves or coffee grounds, which are believed by tea- and coffee-drinking cultures worldwide to bear the print of life left by the one who held the cup and drank the brew.

Finally, patterns of meaning within the bodies and movements of animate creatures are divined as animal signs and omens. Within the cultures of Mediterranean antiquity and pre- and early Christian Europe, as well as diverse tribal cultures worldwide, these patterns of meaning have been established and communicated through augury and auspices, as in interpreting the passage and flight of birds and their cries (or ornithomancy), as well as interpreting the behavior and movements of herd animals such as the horse and the behavior and movements of fish, insects, or reptiles. Through the perception and interpretation of animal portents and prodigies, the diviner alerts the community to the often malign significance of spontaneous appearances of extraordinary, anomalous, or unnatural animal forms. The divining of portents focuses individual and communal awareness on the advent of unavoidable hazards, whether stemming from the gods or from the forces of nature or human society. The reader of portents advises how to minimize and contain their danger by propitiating the forces that sent them with rituals of purification and sacrifice. Portents also can function as signs foretelling and confirming a path of extraordinary destiny communicated to an individual or community by the gods and personifications of fate.

As a subset of divining the body, there are divining systems, elements of which can be found virtually worldwide, that concentrate on the observation and analysis of the meaningful characteristics of the human body alone, believing it to be a microcosm of the meaningful universe. The divination of meaningful patterns in the human microcosm is generally identified as physiognomy, or anthroposcopy. The divination of the bodily and facial features can be broken down into several subsystems, among which are phrenology, or reading the character and mental capacity from the conformation of the skull, and metoposcopy, interpreting the lines that appear in the soles of the feet and the palms of the hands, the latter being

identified independently as chiromancy, or palmistry. As a discipline in itself, palmistry reads the character and destiny of the individual from the convergence of lines and markings on the palm and the shape of the fingers and nails. Meaningful patterns also have been gleaned from human and animal remains in ancient and tribal cultures worldwide through practices entailing sacrifice of the living creature and extraction of the organs (the viscera) or gathering of the skeletal remains of a creature already dead by natural causes. The first method is generally known as haruspicy, the sacrifice to the gods or powers to propitiate and incline them to impart hidden knowledge of present and future situations to the questioner. The reading and documentation of answers given by the gods or powers lie in the interpretation of the physical characteristics of the internal organs of the sacrificed creature. The second method relies on similar interpretive techniques but does not employ sacrifice—for example, scapulimancy and plastromancy, the induction (through the application of heat) of cracks and reading their meaningful patterns in the bones and shells of once-living animals gifted to the diviner by land and sea.

It must be noted that there is considerable overlap of the characteristics of these systems, and many forms of divination share several sets of the qualities and methods listed here. Scholars often have categorized these divinatory phenomena and experiences as discrete and separate categories, whereas in individual systems of divination, the phenomena are found interlinked and interdependent. A given form of divination, for example, may involve a series of ritual acts, including the incubation of dreams, casting of symbols using physical means, numerological and astrological calculations, consultation and performance of inspired or revealed oral and/or written bodies of interpretation, sacrifices to the deities in thanks for their inspired communications and propitiating their proper action on behalf of self or client, and the preparation and administration of medicines or talismanic remedies.

The diversity of these dispersed and disparate historical and geographic practices, the complexity of their rationales and cultural and artistic forms, and the variety of their techniques and tools are consistent only in an overarching purpose that might best be described as healing. This healing purpose operates in individual terms as identification of the personal and immediate causes of spiritual, psychological, emotional, and physical ills and asks for guidance in order to effect healing through appropriate action or response. The healing purpose operates also in communal terms to pinpoint the causes of domestic, communal, tribal, or national disease and disharmony and prescribes a cure often requiring a sacrifice or some other expiation that restores the health of society. Its ultimate referent is the discovery of the root cause and nature of disorder on a planetary, celestial, and cosmic scale, which offers healing through counseling individual and/or communal action to reestablish the universal or divine order. Thus, divining systems are devoted not only to knowing what is hidden about human and extra-human affairs but also to providing tools and techniques for healing the disturbances that

underlie and motivate recourse to divination. The sacrificial, ritual, verbal, and material prescriptions that often append the act of divination encompass a range of healing processes, techniques, substances, and interactions. This dual preventative and curative function encompasses roles that modern society has separated and secularized. In the Western context, for example, these functions include, among others, psychological therapy, spiritual ministry, physical medicine, family counseling, communal arbitration, government liaison, international negotiation, environmental lobby, and science and technology advising.

The history of the scholarly literature on the subject of divination and the mantic arts is extremely diverse, with the greatest emphasis on historical and literary systems. Theoretical discussions and analytical categorizations of divination have been offered by the history of religions approach to this material, such as the useful summary by Evan M. Zeusse in the *Encyclopedia of Religion* (1987), which emphasizes the types of religious experience and categories of perception that are the dominant features of particular divinatory systems even though they may be (and usually are) found in combination. Zeusse's typology of divination offers three main rubrics of experience and perception within which to understand divination: *intuitive divination* through dreams and visionary experience; *possession divination* by spirits and deities of nonhuman agents and of human agents; and lastly, *wisdom divination*, or systems of knowledge and techniques of interpretation based on numeric, geologic, and bodily patterns. Zeusse also distinguishes the ecstatic (intuitive and possession divination) from the nonecstatic (wisdom divination), based upon Plato's criteria of categorization (*Phaedrus* 244 and *Timaeus* 72) and the criteria of many later thinkers. He correctly emphasizes the importance of concepts and practices of sacrifice in relation to all divining systems since all divining is seen as a gift of wisdom and healing that requires a propitiating response on the part of the diviner and/or the client to the gods, ancestors, spirits of nature, powers and directions, or the cosmos as a whole.

The divination systems of the ancient and late antique world based in the cultures of the Middle East and the Mediterranean (Babylonian-Mesopotamian, Canaanite-ancient Israelite, Egyptian, Greco-Roman), which left partial to extensive textual and archaeological records, have perhaps received the greatest share of academic attention from scholars of ancient Near Eastern languages, historians, and classicists, second only to the study of Indian and Chinese divination by south and east Asian specialists. Attention has been focused on the place of divination primarily as religious and philosophical institutions of the aristocracy and ruling body, administered through a priestly class or technical college or guild of practitioners. Systems of divination that flourished during the medieval period in the West, whether Islamic, Jewish, or Christian in orientation—astrology, numerology, cards, geomancy, necromancy, hydromancy, pyromancy, dreams and second sight, physiognomy, foreknowledge and insight through the holiness of

saints and spiritual masters, divination by judicial ordeal, divining by means of sacred scripture, and so forth—have been treated less intensively by historians and religious studies scholars whose attention has focused more strongly upon the normalization of religious institutions and sacred texts during the medieval period. Although there are many medieval texts devoted to these forms of divination (particularly astrology and geomancy), it is also true that many of these practices are found within the interstices of textual and historical record, with little material or archaeological evidence to document their forms and methods.

The study of living systems of divination, predominantly in the contexts of close-knit pastoral and nomadic societies worldwide since the nineteenth century, has been an outgrowth of the anthropological attention paid to the religious beliefs and practices of diverse and discrete tribal and peasant communities in sub-Saharan Africa as well as North Africa; of Native American communities of North and South America; of the shamanistic communities of the Alaskan, Canadian, and Siberian tundra; of Polynesian and Melanesian islanders; of the Malay Archipelago; of Aboriginal Australia; and of the folk traditions of south and east Asia. This anthropological attention has been devoted primarily to the study of folk and traditional systems of divination outside of the context of complex or urban communities or to the survival and adaptation of such traditional systems as a result of modernization.

Divination has not been widely considered in folklore and folklife scholarship. Two works on divination, however, are often referred to by folklorists—William Bascom's *Ifa Divination* and Evon Z. Vogt and Ray Hyman's *Water Witching U.S.A.* These two works addressing two different forms of geomancy, although dated in theory and approach, are still considered classics and are used consistently in folklore and folklife classroom presentations of divination. Interestingly, these books do not share any common method or theoretical perspective. Their representative character regarding the study of divination lies in two approaches: treating divination from a folklore perspective and treating divination as a folk system without recourse to folklore methodology.

Bascom's *Ifa Divination* offers a consistent folkloristic emphasis on oral forms of religious practice. Ifa divination involves a series of steps beginning with dream inspiration, followed by repeated geomantic castings of figures using cowrie shells or palm nuts, and distributing that pattern of figures in wood dust on a divining tray or other surface. Numerological calculations of these castings result in the "figures of Ifa," the deity of divination. It is the visual representation of the numbers that is drawn in wood dust on the tray. Recourse is then made to the oracles of Ifa in order to interpret those figures, after which counsel is given on the correct sacrifices to be made to the Ifa deities. The final step in the cycle of Ifa divination is the prescription of spiritual and physical medicines by the diviner to remedy the spiritual, familial, and social problems that spark the

client's original motivation to seek out divination. Contexting Ifa divination within its social and material nexus (through text and illustration), Bascom's work appropriately emphasizes the folkloristic importance of the selection and performance of oral traditional interpretive verses that are the oracles of the gods accompanying the physical process of casting the figures of Ifa, the master-disciple relationship and received traditions by which diviners are trained and the Ifa oracles are transmitted, and the status and social interactions of the diviner serving the small community. Bascom's approach as a folklorist is not limited to emphasis on oral forms or the folk community but also extends to the credibility given to his informants and the interview process, which is one of the unique hallmarks of folklore method and allows folklore fieldwork to openly engage the world of belief within the framework of nonparticipant observation.

Vogt and Hyman's *Water Witching U.S.A.* treats a folk system—dowsing—from a nonfolkloristic perspective, emphasizing historical and sociological analysis. The diverse names for this form of divining detailed in the work reflect the historical, cultural, and linguistic origins and geographic dispersion of this practice. Divining by a rod, wand, pendulum, or other device is known by many names—dowsing in England, water witching in the United States, *radiesthésie* (or radio-electric detection) in France, and *pendelforschung* (or pendulum research) in Germany.

According to early textual references, dowsing began in Renaissance Europe as a mining technique to divine from the surface the presence and depth of underground minerals. It rapidly spread to searching for underground water and lost objects and even came to be applied to seeking out criminals and missing persons. Through intuitive-psychic and, according to other views, electromagnetic connection with the unseen subsurface or otherwise distant objects, the diviner locates and identifies the objects, signaled by the movement of a wand or pendulum. For Vogt and Hyman, dowsing qualifies as a folk system, at least in the United States, since it originated and is predominantly practiced in rural areas by ordinary, less-educated individuals within folk communities, although it has also come to exist as an urban phenomenon as well. Vogt and Hyman's only truly theoretical examination of water witching is as magical divination, a designation undergirded by a reworked version of the two-tiered model—in this case, “the magical mind” and “the scientific mind.” According to this model, which Vogt and Hyman critique and yet in the end support, the beliefs and practices of the “folk,” particularly the rural folk—such as dowsing—are dominated by “the magical mind” and associated with an “emotional and unreflective attitude,” which make the beliefs and practices superstition. In this view, the authors mirror a trend in folklore scholarship that has long associated and devalued magic as superstition. The most significant drawback of *Water Witching U.S.A.* as a work utilized by folklorists is its lack of folklore content. This work reflects no particular emphasis on oral forms (although a brief section on “witching folklore” is included). There is little attention to the traditional

received nature of transmission of practice or training of practitioners. And most telling, there is an *a priori* distrust and rejection of informant belief, experience, and testimony, which is counter to folklore methodology. Vogt and Hyman's consequent method of fieldwork, using the set questionnaire without reflecting any interviews that may have been conducted, represents a much more statistically oriented approach to social data gathering and analysis, coming out of an older and less-sophisticated strata of folklore and sociology theory.

On the methodological approaches available as models for the study of divination, a number of critiques of divination as religious practice and as folk practice must be offered. The weakness of religious studies and history of religions typologies in the study of divination is their inability to reflect the complexity and interactive quality of these systems, which often rely, as has been noted, on several categories in their performance. Since discovering the presence and nature of folk divining practices is more difficult due to the paucity of written sources and material remains, the scholarly examination of divination from antiquity through the Middle Ages has concentrated on the relationship of institutional religious forms and sanctions to popular forms of divination existing outside of the institutional religious context and interacting with it at different levels, from conflict to complementarity. Thus, insufficient attention has been given to systems of divination considered in their own right, independent of institutional religious contexts; to the interaction between practitioners of divination and the folk; and to folk rather than elite systems of divination. The complex interactions between educated and elite cultural systems of divination arising to serve royal courts and wealthy aristocracies and the dissemination of popular variants of court systems among the diverse divining practices of the common people, as well as the reverse trend of the intellectualization of folk divining into elite narrative traditions, have yet to be adequately studied. Finally, very little attention has been given to modern systems of divination, which rely upon dissemination by mass media and have a broad popular appeal and expression within the complex urban societies of the West. Modern European and North American divinatory beliefs and practices communicated by print and other forms of mass media—such as astrology, numerology, tarot, channeling, Ouija board and other forms of mediumistic divination, speaking in tongues and prophecy, I Ching, runes, crystal gazing, ESP and precognitive dreaming, past-life regression, astral and out-of-body experience, urban dowsing, and psychometry—have not received the depth and seriousness of scholarly treatment as the same or similar systems have in either historical or anthropological contexts.

ESP, for example, is a topic in the context of modern divination that relies upon the conceptual categories of parapsychology and the modern study of paranormal phenomena. ESP, in traditional folk contexts, would have been termed “second sight,” and according to Finnish folklorist Leea Virtanen's 1977 study of historical and contemporary memorates regarding ESP experiences, it embraces the

faculties of telepathy, clairvoyance, and precognition of future events. The use of such parapsychological terminology may seem unrelated to a discussion of divination, but the phenomena identified with ESP cover a range of mental, emotional, and sensory perceptions that are central to all forms of intuitive divination, such as precognitive dreams and visions, auditory and olfactory sensations, inner voices and directives, illusions and hallucinatory experiences, heightened and changed emotional and physical states, perception of signs and omens in animals and plants, and so forth. The rubrics of extrasensory perception and psychokinesis, also known as psi awareness and psi activity, distinguish a polarity of experience from spontaneous awareness to focused action. Similarly, particular forms of divining rely on the spontaneous reception of knowledge through intuitive, unconscious, and otherwise altered mental states or acquisition of knowledge through the use of techniques and instruments of divination.

Regarding modern systems of divination practiced in the West, it also may be appropriate to consider the significance of the term *psychic* in relation to the impact of mass media on popular belief and practice. Many of the systems listed earlier that are widely practiced in the contemporary West are often allied with the term *psychic*, and thus media characterizations of such phenomena often use the term in various pairings—for example, *psychic astrology*, *psychic numerology*, *psychic tarot reading*, or merely *psychic reading*. The meaning of the term *psychic* in these contexts is difficult to identify concretely but seems to refer to a wide range of skills that are generally understood to be intuitive and precognitive and that function in conjunction with the various techniques of divination. Thus, astrology, which is based in numerological and astronomical calculation and its symbolic interpretation of potential destiny, is wedded in the term *psychic astrologer* with the notion of the reader's precognitive ability to predict and achieve certitude in interpretation of past, present, and future events. Similarly, numerology as a system of significance is combined with belief in the efficacy of psychic prediction to yield luck in numbers and money with such diverse applications as choosing the winning lottery number; selecting the correct day to go to gambling casinos in order to win at slot machines and card tables or the right number of the horse or dog to bet on at the racetrack; and propitious or malign days for important life events and passages (weddings, divorces, birthdates, major trips, and so forth). Finally, and perhaps most characteristic, is the appellation *psychic tarot reader*. The client's belief and trust in the reader's ability to effectively apply the traditional oral narrative interpretation of numerical and pictorial symbol (whether in the 78-card tarot deck, the regular 52-card playing deck, or any number of other types of card decks available) to his or her needs is reliant upon the reader possessing the innate faculty of psychic prediction (of future events and situations), intuitive and inspired interpretation (of past and present events and situations), and empathic awareness of persons, places, and objects. Psychic ability,

with its attendant faculty of empathy or sensing the emotions of persons, places, and objects, can involve direct physical contact (laying on of hands, placing an object on the face or body) or nonphysical apprehension (which can include visual or auditory experience) or emotional sensation alone. The generic label *psychic reader* includes several interrelated faculties and types of divinatory prediction that operate independent from divining tools such as psychometry, séance with the dead, discovering past lives, and others. A specific application of the empathic talent as part of the psychic reading is the practice of psychometry, or the empathic reading of objects brought by the client (photographs, jewelry, or small mementos of family, loved ones, children, close friends, or suspected enemies). The perspective that objects bear a unique and personal emotional “signature” that can be read by the psychic encompasses two interrelated beliefs: (1) the reader’s innate ability to perceive empathically, whether in physical contact or not, and (2) the principle of contagious magic—that objects are believed to absorb the emotional and spiritual energies and intentions of persons and events by direct physical contact or propinquity. In the modern Western context, with its prevailing rationalism and empiricism, the intuitive, empathic, and precognitive faculties assigned to the psychic are often considered to be extraordinary and the result of a unique and personal gift, innate to the individual. This gift cannot be taught or otherwise transmitted, although there is a strong folk belief, which survives in this popular context, that these faculties are inheritable (similar to folk beliefs that the seventh son or daughter has second sight or that second sight runs in families) and arise spontaneously. It is perhaps an irony that the diverse rituals and techniques of divination that continue in living folk and popular practice around the world are all that remain and survive intact of many of the great religious and philosophical traditions of the ancient and medieval worlds. The relegation of divination as a folk practice to the fringes of religious attention and historical and contemporary inquiry is, from this perspective, all the more questionable.

The cultural range of the treatments of divination as a living practice within folklore scholarship and treatments of folk systems outside of folklore as a whole has been amazingly narrow. Such treatments are limited, for the most part, to individual examples within tribal and simple societies or rural communities within complex societies that have strong oral traditional elements and folk art forms. If the subject of divination and its theoretical exploration within folklore and folklife is restricted to early definitions of the “little” community, if religious belief and practice are limited to oral and traditionally received forms, and if religious material culture is confined to a narrow characterization of folk art, then the range of contemporary belief, practice, artifact, environment, and lifeways that relate to divining worldwide is not being addressed. A vast range of contemporary systems of divination, communicated by various forms of print and electronic media (as well as oral traditional received forms), are yet to be found by folklorists—systems

that exist within and outside living world religious systems, in rural and urban communities within complex societies, and in simple agrarian and nomadic communities.

Kathleen Malone O'Connor

See Also Belief, Folk; Magic; Myth; Religion, Folk.

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Drama, Folk

Performances deploying recognizably dramatic techniques in the presentation of traditional materials under the auspices of a recurrent social activity of which they are a regular but subsidiary feature. To this theoretical paradigm, lived reality will conform only to one degree or another. There is no traditional drama. There are only traditional performances that are more or less dramatic and dramatic performances that are more or less traditional; there are also traditional dramatic activities that are more or less performances. And the theoretical ideal is the optimum combination of these elements (traditional, dramatic, performance) rather than the maximum degree of any one of them. An activity can be insufficiently dramatic to qualify as drama but too dramatic to qualify as traditional or insufficiently traditional to qualify as a tradition but too traditional to qualify as drama.

An activity qualifies as performance to the degree that it is possible to distinguish between those who perform and those who observe the performance. However convincing the new identities assumed by participants in a dance-induced trance may be, for example, the activity is more akin to ritual than to drama if all participate, and the trance is observed or celebrated rather than performed. With whatever gusto children throw themselves into the roles of cowboys and Indians, mothers and fathers, doctors and patients, if no one is watching or if the children are not aware of those who are watching, their activity is more akin to game than to drama, played or enjoyed rather than performed. But, at the opposite extreme, if the distinction between active performers and passive spectators becomes too marked, too akin to the theatrical, the traditional status of the activity is threatened under other headings.

A performance qualifies as dramatic to the degree that it deploys recognizably mimetic features and to a mimetic end—the representation of reality other than that of the performance event itself. A physical performance, however spectacular the costumes or movements of performers are, is dramatic only to the extent that these aspects are designed and taken to be mimetic. Is a costume of ribbons, straw, or hair merely visual spectacle, or is it a means to the representation of a god or a beast? Are painted faces a device to conceal identity, of ritual significance, merely decorative, or representative of a different ethnic identity? Are movements, postures, and gestures purely locomotive (as in a dance), purely

entertaining (through grotesque drollery), or mimetically imitative of some other being in the process of doing something else? Correspondingly with regard to verbal performance (song and speech), an utterance is dramatic only to the degree that some attempt is made to give the impression the speaker is someone other than him- or herself. Telling a folktale is not traditional drama; it may modulate into the dramatic if direct speech is rendered, through posture, gesture, or voice, in character. At the opposite extreme, again, there are performances that are so close to regular, theatrical drama in costuming, acting style, dialogue, and staging (and in the distinction between performers and spectators) that their credentials as traditional dramatic performances are compromised. Mimesis is an aspect of traditional drama, not its ultimate aim.

A dramatic performance is, in itself, traditional to the degree that there is substantial continuity in subject and/or form between individual performances. But here, too, both too little and too much are equally problematic. Some traditions (for example, the English mummers' plays) evince fairly extreme stability over time, but this may be a more recent phenomenon and, indeed, symptomatic of the tradition's loss of vitality. The late-medieval German *Fastnachtspiele*, in every other way analogous to the mummers' plays—short dramatic interludes performed by small groups of men in the course of the community's seasonal perambulation—may be more typical of traditional drama. In a given town (Nuremberg is the best-documented example), a new play would be written each year, but it would be traditional in the recurrence of overall form (prologue, dramatic interlude, epilogue, dance), structures (speech sequence, altercation), plot items (fight, cure, trial, contest, wooing), characters (peasants, fools), and tone (unrepentant scatology). Absolute discontinuity (a totally new play each time, with different characters, plots, themes, and structures) would qualify the activity as regular theater; absolute continuity (a sequence of performances evincing exact recapitulation of cast, costume, movement, and gesture and verbatim reproduction of the text) suggests attitudes and purposes that would be more characteristic of (and might define the activity as) ritual rather than drama. Because it is the relationship to context that is definitive of traditional drama, there will be neither extremely little nor extremely much continuity between performances. The recurrent context prompts and requires a degree of continuity in the performance that is a part of it, but this context, as a living social and personal reality, will vary from one occurrence to the next, and the performance, which is subsidiary and therefore responsive, will vary likewise.

Traditional drama is traditional primarily by virtue of its context and particularly its subservient relationship to that context. The context is recurrent: a set of circumstances whose occurrence prompts a dramatic performance but that do not reoccur for the sole sake of the performance; the drama is therefore dependent upon and subsidiary to the context. A series of dramatic performances, however repetitive in content (commedia dell'arte, pantomime, puppet theater), does not

qualify as traditional if its auspices are specifically theatrical, that is, if the social activity concerned (going to the theater, sitting on the beach in front of the Punch-and-Judy stall) is for the sake of the dramatic performance itself. Traditional drama is always part of something else that would live (if less vitally) without it. Much medieval drama and Renaissance pageantry are delicately poised on this functional axis: Were performances of the medieval mystery cycles, which qualify as traditional drama under most other headings, theatrical occasions accompanied by some pious festivity, or were they piously festive occasions accompanied by some drama (which only in the latter case qualifies as traditional)? Did Renaissance monarchs go to their banqueting houses to see masques (which would make these theatrical occasions) or were masques put on to provide diversion at royal banquets (which would qualify them as traditional)?

It is this contextual factor that militates against traditional drama being too dramatic (in terms of mimesis) or too theatrical (in terms of the distinction between performers and audience). The purpose of the performance, ultimately, is less, more, or other than an entertainment achieving absolute mimesis; other factors are operative and even dominant. And unlike the other features that define traditional drama, subservience to context is the one criterion of which there can be too little but not too much.

Traditional drama was one of the terms suggested in the 1970s and 1980s in the pursuit of an acceptable alternative to the term *folk drama*, whose connotations were considered no longer accurate or appropriate and which had become associated with a research approach that had gone out of fashion. Indigenous theater also was mooted, but vernacular drama may be a better alternative. Originally referring to homebred as opposed to imported slaves in the Roman Empire and later applied to language, handwriting, and architecture, vernacular has appropriate connotations of the local and the useful—not to mention the underprivileged—for those who see traditional drama as essentially different from and opposed to the theatrical traditions of the social and cultural elite. The important segment of traditional drama forming part of seasonal or occasional customs might then usefully be distinguished within the overall field as customary drama.

From its inception in the mid-nineteenth century and until fairly recently, research on traditional drama was almost exclusively approached from a survivalist perspective, focusing on ultimate origins, which were believed to be the fertility rituals of savage communities. Folk drama, largely in the form of the English mummers' plays and analogous European forms, was therefore seen as a direct survival of the fertility-inducing ritual (involving the death and rebirth of a king, scapegoat, god, or the fertility principle itself) posited by anthropologists of the evolutionary school, such as Wilhelm Mannhardt and James G. Frazer. The connection was manifest in the seasonal incidence (typically, the dead of winter when fertility needed invigorating), the animal or vegetal costumes, the

exclusively male performers, the ambient scatology, and appropriate action such as death and revival or wooing and mating.

This approach had both positive and negative consequences for the study of the traditions concerned. On the positive side, the ancient pedigree accorded the otherwise humble and obscure customs of modern villages considerable significance for the study of primitive religion and mentality and hence for the later cultural traditions believed to spring from them. In consequence, folk drama was appealed to in “myth and ritual” approaches to ancient Greek drama, medieval theater, and the Elizabethan stage, to medieval literature as diverse as the Elder Edda and the grail romances, and to witchcraft, as providing evidence of the prehistoric ritual for which prehistoric evidence was inevitably scarce. This celebrity came at the price, however, of neglect and distortion in other ways. Only those forms of folk drama with credibly ritual features were accorded attention, to the neglect of those not so endowed, and the focus of study was these supposedly ritual features rather than others that might, from perspectives other than ultimate origins, be interesting or significant. Given that the period concerned is as recent as about 1850–1950, we are surprisingly ill informed about aspects of the performance itself (such as the text or the comic figures and episodes) and, above all, about aspects of the context (such as who performed the plays, for whom, why, and on which subjects). Indeed, the major legacy of the ritual origins theory, whatever its merits, is the neglect of the living traditions of folk drama that might have been observed in hundreds of villages in the period concerned in England; the picture is similar—and for similar reasons—in much of Europe.

The general shift of folkloristics in the 1970s to a more social orientation manifested itself in this field in the widening of focus to encompass other dramatic traditions, together with an increasing awareness of material outside the European sphere, and, above all, in the emphasis accorded to the recording and analysis of recent traditions and their contexts; this was accomplished by direct observation where possible, by interviewing those with memories (as performers or spectators) of now defunct local traditions, and by searching in local documentary (typically journalistic) sources. This approach, too, has its drawbacks, particularly the reluctance to contemplate historical dimensions and the consequent lack of work on the undoubted significance of traditional drama within late medieval and early modern cultural history—for example, as an influence on (as opposed to the origin of) the early theater.

Distinctions within the field of traditional drama can be made according to a number of criteria, which include (not surprisingly, given their significance in its definition) the auspices of performance, that is, the recurrent social activity of which the performance is a part.

Of such auspices, the most significant, certainly in scholarship and probably also in tradition itself, are the customary auspices, and of these, the seasonal customs are the most familiar. In most parts of the world, the passing year is marked by the recurrence of regular calendrical festivals. Their precise incidence depends

on cultural factors such as religion and agricultural practices, but there is a distinct tendency to reflect the near universal rhythms of light and darkness, warmth and cold, rain and drought. Many such observances involve spectacular displays, often with quasi-religious status, and many such spectacles (or parts of them) evince distinctly dramatic features. Their incidence can be strictly calendrical, on the same date each year (in relation to the locally relevant calendar), or merely seasonal (for example, concurrent with the onset or completion of agricultural tasks, which vary slightly from year to year). Other customs providing the milieu for dramatic performances have a biographical rhythm, marking important phases or transitions in the human life cycle (birth, maturity, couple formation, death), as, for example, the wake-games of Ireland. A third, smaller cluster of customs is purely sporadic, prompted by events (political, social, domestic) unrelated to any other rhythm; most familiar is the demonstrative parade (charivari) provoked by domestic behavior found unacceptable by the community.

Traditional dramatic performances also can occur under purely recreational auspices, that is, when a group of people gather under circumstances and in a mood conducive to entertainment, some of which can have mimetic characteristics. Some of these occasions are afforded by seasonal festivals, but the dramatic performances are less organically embedded in the occasion and can feasibly occur under other auspices. Many of the semi-dramatic dance games more recently associated with children previously were dramatic entertainments at convivial gatherings of adults or adolescents. Dramatic skits of various kinds likewise figure among gatherings of pupils and students of North American educational institutions.

Some performances, finally, are effectively utilitarian, in that they are a means to a quite practical end, such as selling goods or services. Advertising cures for sale has been accompanied by entertainment of a distinctly dramatic character, from the medieval charlatan to the Wild West medicine show. And the spiel of other vendors, in street markets, for example, also can acquire dramatic elements.

An alternative system of typology can be applied on the basis of the immediate context of performance, particularly in terms of the processes by which performers and audience are brought together. Amidst much variation, there are basically two such alternative systems.

When performers and spectators already are gathered at the venue, the context is an assembly, be it in an enclosed indoor space or an outdoor one defined by some focal point or perimeter. There will be considerable variation in the degree to which an area is physically adjusted for the performance. The more this is the case (for example, with a substantial raised stage and/or seating arrangements for spectators) and the more this is done in advance, the closer the performance is to the theatrical and the less traditional its contextual status becomes. Most performances qualifying as purely recreational under the preceding heading tend to belong, contextually, to the assembly.

Many, if not most, performances qualifying as customary, however, are associated with a different physical context, one in which there is a deliberately achieved encounter between performers and spectators; further divisions are possible in terms of the movement of the groups (relative to each other and to the surrounding topography) by which this is brought about. Many take the form of a parade, in which the performers progress through the landscape, performing for spectators encountered along the way as they move and/or at a number of stations where the performers halt. Instances of this type range from the medieval mystery cycles and passion plays performed on wagons in the streets of European cities to the sword-dance plays of twentieth-century Yorkshire and Durham. Much less common is the reverse form, the interception, in which passersby are encountered (and transformed into spectators) by stationary performers, on the model of the more familiar beggars and buskers of modern cities. The stationary tableaux with which medieval and Renaissance cities welcomed incoming mayors and monarchs conform to this pattern, as do the mountebank and street vendor shows under the utilitarian heading. Most familiar of all is the customary house visit, in which performers penetrate, welcome or not, into the homes of those who thus become spectators. The reverse of this pattern, the reception of incoming visitors by performing hosts, is virtually restricted to the welcomes accorded by noble households to visiting monarchy in the Renaissance period. Some customs combine the parade through the community with visits to a number of houses in what may be best described as a perambulation.

The matter and form of traditional drama naturally vary a great deal, but there are nonetheless several widely recurrent features. Some of these features perhaps reflect the limited theatrical resources and other than purely theatrical ambitions common to most traditions, as well as the shared tendency to be linked to particular auspices, such as seasonal festivals.

Given the wish or need to make an impression within a context that does not guarantee attention, characters (and the costumes used to achieve them) tend to the unusual or the spectacular. For example, the more or less accurate impersonation of beasts (bears, horses, bulls, goats, rams) exists alongside figures from the fauna of local myth and fantasy (dragons, giants, trolls, ethnic grotesques), with an elaboration varying from the blacking of the face to unwieldy contraptions manipulated by several performers.

Similar factors favor dramatic structures that (whatever the plot motivating them) involve fairly simple but striking patterns. There are simple confrontations between two figures of an antagonistic nature (two gods, two warriors, hero and monster, man and wife, master and servant) or a sexual nature (female and wooer/seducer); there are also multiple confrontations between two groups distinguished on ethnic, political, or religious lines. These horizontal patterns are matched vertically by downward and upward movements. The variously achieved “slaying and

revival” theme common to many traditions, of which much was made by scholars employing a ritualist approach, may owe its ubiquity, if not its origins, to a simple dramaturgical circumstance: A figure falling down and getting up is the most striking visual effect that can be achieved in traditions whose theatrical resources are largely confined to the bodies of the performers and what is done with them.

Whatever the specific matters and forms involved, the dominance of context over mimesis gives traditional drama a characteristically presentational, rather than fully representational, dramaturgy. While consciously representing something other than themselves and the time and place of performance, performers remain conscious of themselves as presenting a show to an audience in a given time and place. Dramatic illusion, though aimed for or gestured at to one degree or another, is therefore breached consistently by awareness of context and relationship to the audience: in prologues and epilogues that refer to the occasion (for example, the season or the venue and purpose of the show) and facilitate the transition between the real and dramatic worlds; by the elaborate introduction of new figures; by direct address from within the fiction of the play world to the audience or even interaction (verbal and/or physical) with spectators.

Thomas Pettit

See Also Charivari/Shivaree; Custom; Evolutionary Theory; Festival; Fool; Mask; Mumming; Myth-Ritual Theory.

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E

Emic/Etic

A conceptual framework that distinguishes between two strategies used to categorize human behavior: *emic*, often referred to as native, ethnic, internal, or insider point of view in relation to a specific cultural system, and *etic*, representing scholarly, analytical, or external constructs employed by outsiders, primarily for the purpose of cross-cultural, comparative study.

Linguist Kenneth Pike coined the terms *etic* and *emic* from the corresponding linguistic terms *phonetic* (referring to the classification of speech sounds) and *phonemic* (referring to sound features as they are related to each other in a particular language system). He intended for *etic* and *emic* to mean for human behavior what the terms *phonetic* and *phonemic* mean for language study. An *etic* approach, Pike argued, is nonstructural, whereas in *emic* approaches, the emphasis is on systemic relationships in a specific culture. For example, an *etic* approach as conceived by Pike might describe dance costumes worn at a festival one by one, listing colors, sizes, and numbers of sequins and feathers, whereas an *emic* approach might describe the function of a particular group of dancers as a whole, how their costumes complemented each other, and how one group's costumes competed or clashed with another group's costumes at the same festival, as well as how the dance festival itself functioned in general for that particular community. *Emic* approaches strive to present comprehensive systems of relationships present within one specific culture, but *etic* units are nonstructural and free-floating.

When Pike introduced the two terms in 1962, he thought of *etics* as a starting point from which a scholar could begin to grasp a culture's *emic* categories; he envisioned describing *emic* units as the goal of a final analysis. Ideally, he proposed, the two vantage points would be stereoscoped into one unified vision, the *etic* terms gradually being modified until they accommodated the *emic* units of description. He emphasized that these two complementary perspectives did not constitute a dichotomy but rather combined to give the analyst a three-dimensional perspective: two views of the same data collapsed into one unified understanding.

Anthropologist Marvin Harris criticized Pike's "emic bias" and turned the equation around: One had to collect *emic* units to develop *etic* units. "Etic analysis is not a steppingstone to the discovery of *emic* structures, but to the discovery of *etic* structures," Harris wrote. "The goal is neither to convert *etics* to *emics* nor *emics* to *etics*, but rather to describe both and if possible to explain one in terms of the

other.” Harris’s interpretation of the etic/emic concepts permits the acknowledgment of hidden or unseen systems that have a direct bearing on human systems of meaning. (For example, Hindus do not kill cattle, and yet the mortality rate of bull calves is unnaturally high; as Harris implied, a strictly emic analysis would not permit the etic deduction that Hindus allow male calves to starve to death since emically, Hindus do not kill cattle.) Harris’s conception also permits diachronic analysis, the comparison of the same culture at different points in time.

Alan Dundes adopted the etic/emic distinction in proposing a more logical system for the international classification of narrative units than current tale type and motif indexes. He proposed that motifemes (also known as emic motifs, both terms equivalent to Vladimir Propp’s function) be used as the primary structural unit in narrative classification. Thus, using Dundes’s example, the motifeme of “helpful animal,” holding a slot on the emic plane, could be filled by any number of appropriate etic “allomotifs,” such as cow, cat, bird, and so forth. The motifeme itself would be positioned according to its relationship to a higher sequential context (such as a particular episode or tale type). To date, however, few have accepted Dundes’s challenge to develop a more logical classification system; the job is apparently too massive.

On a broader basis, the etic/emic distinction has burgeoned into several brands of ethnoscience, ethnosemantics, new ethnography, and ethnography of speaking that emphasize not just rigid descriptions but also analyses of cultural dynamics. The diversity of culture is acknowledged, and native categories for sorting out the world are eagerly sought. The new ethnographers emphasize developing good emic descriptions now in order to develop good etic frameworks in the future. Ideally, after enough detail is gathered, generalizations and hypotheses about human behavior can be made cross-culturally. The emic/etic movement is often criticized, however, for becoming bogged down in microscopic emic detail while failing to significantly advance etic theory.

Linda Kinsey Adams

See Also Linguistic Approach; Motif.

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Enigma, Folk

A cluster of genres that share a structure of puzzle and solution and a norm of dialogic performance. The *riddle* and such related forms as the *clever question*, *catch question*, *riddle joke*, and *neck riddle* generally take an overtly interrogative form. The poser asks a puzzling question, and the respondent attempts to guess the answer; the proffered solution is then accepted, rejected, or, if the respondent could give no answer, provided by the poser.

Enigmas are not ordinary questions; the poser does not want the information contained in the answer. They also are not rhetorical questions, in which the answer is assumed beforehand or contained in the question. They are true questions in that they demand an answer. But the answer, like the question, is conventional, and the enigma is constituted of both elements together.

Traditional enigmas are one of the most widespread and earliest documented forms of verbal art, found in Sanskrit hymns, the Bible, and Greek tragedy (as in the famous riddle of the Sphinx from *Oedipus Rex*). There appears, however, to be a correlation between the prevalence of riddling in a society and the presence of oral interrogation as a means of carrying on such business as the education of children and the exercise of justice. Where questioning is important in the work of a culture, it is important in play as well.

Cross-culturally, enigmas are most important among children, although they are never limited to them entirely. Many scholars have observed the ways in which riddling functions to socialize and enculturate children. In African cultures in which skills in argumentation are vital to adult prestige and power, children engage in vigorous debate over the acceptability of riddle solutions. In European peasant cultures, riddles seem to be less flexible and serve principally to teach cultural rules and categories. In Madagascar, Lee Haring argues, the importance of the enigma lies primarily in its question-and-answer form, which becomes the paradigm for more complex dialogic interactions in adult speech genres.

Although children generally perpetuate riddling traditions on their own, without encouragement from adults, adults also appropriate the enigma as a technique of formal pedagogy. The Socratic method and the Christian catechism, not to mention school entrance examinations, are part of a worldwide use of enigmas in initiation ceremony, as the means of access to a restricted code and entry into a restricted group. Deliberate obscurity and special or archaic language often enhance the exclusionary power of the enigma. An outsider who successfully

penetrates this obscurity displays intelligence and resource and thus worthiness to be accepted into the group.

Enigmas construct a hierarchical relationship between poser and respondent. The questioner has authority over the questioned and may refuse a solution. Certainly, a refusal may be disputed by the larger group or undercut by the questioner's failure to provide the acceptable alternative solution, and a group may set limits to the questioner's control of the floor in a riddling session. However, as a rule, the riddler retains authority as long as he or she shows competence in the role. Good riddlers often take advantage of their skill to humble rivals in other domains, and riddling sessions easily become contests for prestige and power.

Young children seem to understand riddling as a model of parental authority. Their first riddles are simply questions with arbitrary answers, as arbitrary as adult instructions and reasonings often appear to be. To be the riddler is to have a parallel authority within the riddling frame: A solution is right "because I say so." Moreover, play with enigmas prepares participants for other hierarchies of knowledge. Not everyone in a society has the right to ask questions or to acquire privileged information; low position generally means low access. However, playing at riddles also teaches a helpful lesson in coping—someone in a low position can rise in or overturn the hierarchy by virtue of cleverness. In narratives incorporating neck riddles, the protagonist triumphs by posing or guessing an apparently insoluble riddle. In the same way in life, younger children can gain prestige among their elders by skillful riddling performance, old women rich in traditional knowledge can disconcert their university-educated grandchildren by posing questions they cannot answer, or a presuming folklorist from outside the community may be put in his or her place with an embarrassing catch.

The power relationships negotiated in the riddling process often are reflected in the content of enigmas. West Indian riddles often present the object described as the property of the father, the chief authority figure ("My father have a cock and every time it crow, it crow fire—A gun"). In Malagasy riddles, paradoxes based on size allude to inversions of power relations ("When the little one comes, the great one takes off his hat—The great water pot").

Riddling sessions form part of various larger events and forms of sociability. A riddling session may open an evening of singing and storytelling in European peasant cultures or come in the middle of an event to revitalize interaction after a long series of monologic performances. Often, the riddling brings children and outsiders into active participation, not only out of a desire to test and initiate newcomers but also for a quite practical reason: A community's stock of riddles is generally limited, and it is not easy to find a native adult who has not heard them all before. In Scotland in the 1960s, Kenneth S. Goldstein found that the only adults to riddle were the "travelers" or "tinkers," a subculture of peddlers, who, because of their itinerant lifestyle, had constant access to new enigmas.

In some cultures, riddling is restricted to specific occasions. In traditional Philippine Tagalog society, riddles were told during wakes, at harvest time, and in courtship, and these are important occasions for riddling in many societies. The confusing language of riddles seems to be significant in the dangerous periods of wake and harvest, when spirits are believed to be uncomfortably close to living people. It has been suggested that, like the interlocked designs and mazes sometimes used as apotropaic devices on doorways and talismans, the enigma serves to block and turn away evil spirits. Aesthetically, the binary form of the riddle, both linking and separating its halves, mimics the situation of the wake, when the dead are both part of the group and distinct from it. The frequency of the “living and the dead” motif in neck riddles performed during West Indian wakes comments directly on the disruption of everyday classifications at such liminal times.

In courtship, the conjunctive potential of enigmas is played upon. Posing a riddle to a specific person is a way of creating a binary interaction within a larger group without committing the participants to more risky personal topics. Putting the respondent on the spot may be a practical test of wit and resource in a potential mate; the Queen of Sheba used this tactic with Solomon, as did Turandot with her suitors. More common is the apparently obscene catch question, used to stimulate an erotic awareness. Even the general suggestion of unspoken levels of meaning inherent in enigmatic discourse may serve to create a consciousness between riddler and respondent. Often, the content of riddles in peasant cultures plays on traditional gender distinctions, and the structure of the *true riddle*, with its postulation of a unity bringing apparent opposites together, has as its base metaphor, James Fernandez suggests, the conjunction of the sexes.

Enigmas, then, both conjoin and separate; they confuse and they clarify, depending on the emphases of the culture, the performer, and the particular riddle. In intimating a deeper level, alluding to things hidden, they allow the unspeakable to be spoken. Neck riddles tell of incest, sacrifice, and pollution at society’s foundations; the riddle proper points up the problems of fit between the world and our representations of it; riddle jokes insist on the scandals and disasters that undermine our confidence in the systems we have made. The apparent triviality of the form, its small size, and its fixity allow us to contemplate flux and chaos with relative impunity.

Visual and Gestural Enigmas

The enigma follows cultures into literacy. Literate peoples may develop riddles that depend for their solution upon a knowledge of orthography:

The beginning of every end, The end of every place,
The beginning of eternity, The end of time and space.
(*the letter E*)

The rebus is a kind of enigma that exploits ambiguities in the literate code as the true riddle exploits ambiguities in the oral one. The familiar contemporary forms of the rebus play on the multiple readings of letters, numerals, and punctuation marks:

r/e/a/d/i/n/g

(Reading between the lines)

YYUR YYUB ICUR YY4 me

(Too wise you are; too wise you be; I see you are too wise for me)

Others use the position of words on the page:

I have to paid

because

work I am

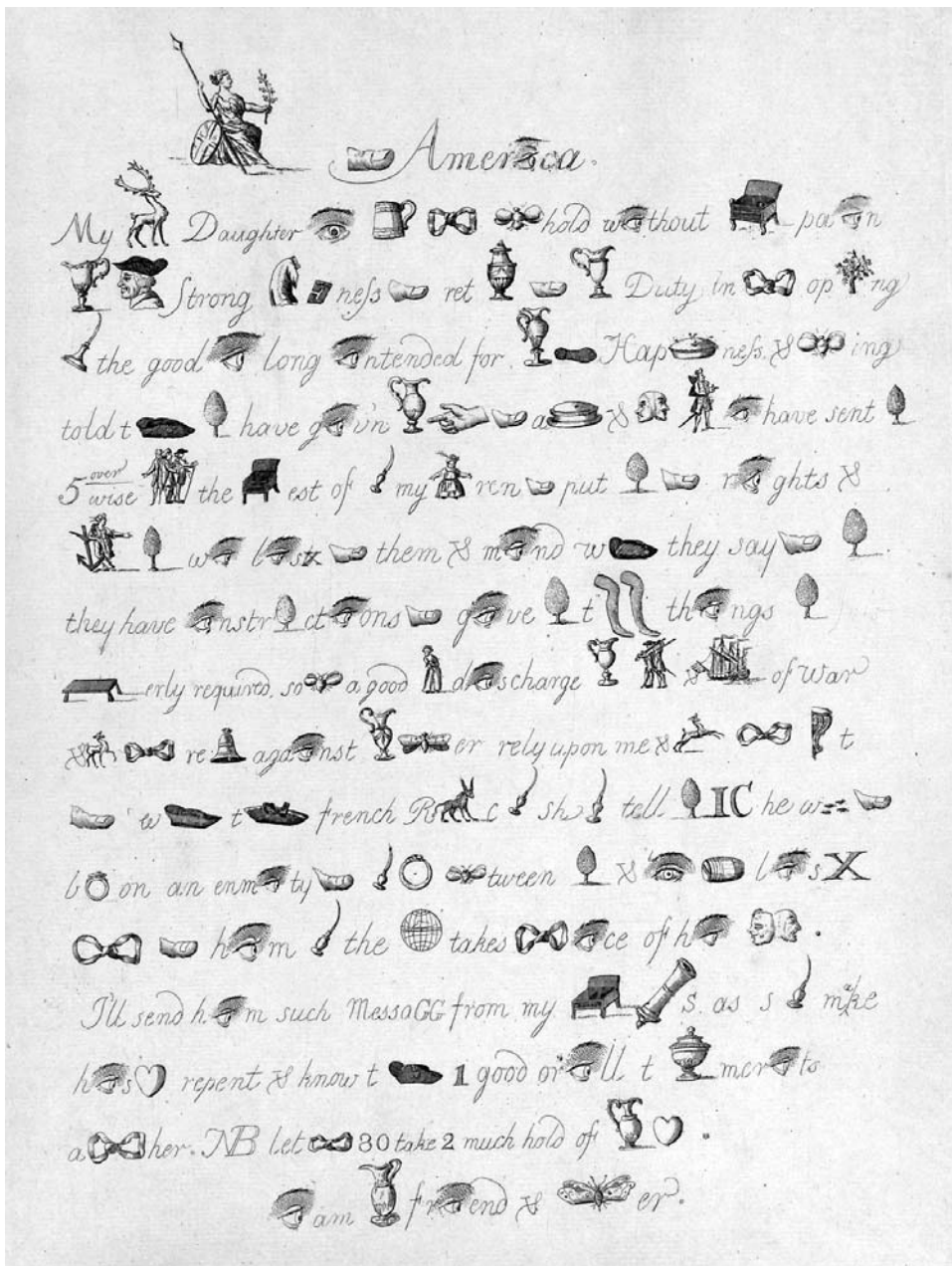
(I have to overwork because I am underpaid)

A riddle about reading, the rebus entertains children struggling to master the conventions of written language; it enables them to distinguish “text”—a linear sequence of conventional signs—from “picture,” a spatial arrangement of iconic signs.

Older forms of the rebus (Latin for “by things,” that is, a representation using things instead of words) exploit iconic signs instead of the alphabet. In this way, they may convey a message that is understandable but less compromising than an explicit verbal representation. When the young Julius Caesar was administrator of the Roman mint, he put the picture of an elephant on the coinage. Since he was a private citizen at that time, he could not use his own portrait, but the word for elephant in Oscan dialect sounded like “Caesar.” We also may think of the early Christian use of a fish symbol to mark secret meeting places: The Greek word *ichthys* could be read as an acrostic for “Jesus Christ Son of God Savior.”

Rebuses are also found in heraldic emblems, playing with the folk etymologies of proper names. Thus, the city of Solsona in Catalonia has a blazing sun on its arms, a reference to the Latin word *sol*. And the abbot of Ramsey in thirteenth-century England made his arms legible even to the illiterate with a drawing of a ram in the sea.

The pictorial rebus leads us to such contemporary amusements as the *doodle*, a visual form of the riddle joke. The doodle is a simple, apparently abstract drawing, revealed by the poser to stand for some absurdly complex phenomenon. Thus, the narrator of Antoine de Ste.-Exupéry’s *The Little Prince* draws what looks to his parents like the outline of a man’s hat: he tells them it is really a boa constrictor that has swallowed an elephant. Other doodles rely on an unfamiliar



perspective to confuse the viewer: A circle inside a bigger circle is revealed as a bald fat man seen from above.

The enigma also takes gestural or mimetic form. In some cases, this gestural form allows the observance of speech prohibitions, as in the Native American northern Athapaskan enigmas about bears. In the Athapaskan culture, it is considered dangerous to mention bears in the presence of women, for women are said to have the ability to warn the animals of approaching hunters through their dreams. So one man who has found a bear's den communicates his discovery to another man by walking clumsily with his toes pointed inward or by throwing a handful of hair into the fire (to recall how the bear's skin is singed after the kill).

Other gestural enigmas enhance the interactional potential of the riddle by turning it into full-scale dramatic play. In nineteenth-century England, the genteel amusement of the literary charade, a verse form describing each syllable and then the complete word of the solution, became a performance using costuming and staging.

Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre* provides an artful but realistic rendering of an upper-class house party playing at charades. The hero, Mr. Rochester, and Blanche Ingram, a woman in search of a suitable husband, enact a charade for which the solution is "Bridewell," a prison. A mimed wedding procession stands for the first syllable, "Bride"; the biblical Rebecca giving water to Isaac's servant is "Well"; and Mr. Rochester, in rags and chains, performs the complete word. The performance provides the occasion for the opulent Miss Ingram to display herself in suggestive and flattering guises, for much flirtatious byplay between herself and Mr. Rochester, and for Mr. Rochester to convey to Jane, his true love in the audience, that marriage with Miss Ingram would be a prison to him. Like the oral riddling session or the literary charade, the performed charade allows multiple levels of communication between participants.

Both visual and performed enigmas, then, carry on the main preoccupations of oral riddles. The visual enigma further exploits the ambiguities of representation. Performed riddles enact the disjunctions and conjunctions between the sexes or between actors and their roles. The dyadic interaction of poser and respondent remains at the heart of the form.

Dorothy Noyes

See Also Clever Question/Wisdom Question; Neck Riddle; Rebus; Riddle; Riddle Joke.

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Environmentalism

A social movement or philosophical stance that takes as its defining characteristic an awareness of or concern for the natural world. Folklore has had a long association with the physical environment, both the material itself and as an academic discipline. Much of the early study of folklore, especially in Europe, centered around finding the essential spirit of a group of people (in German, the *Volksgeist*). This notion comes largely from Johann Gottfried Herder, a German intellectual credited as the forerunner of National Romanticism. As the spirit of a group of people was thought to reside in the more “primitive” members of a group, scholars and collectors of folklore across nineteenth-century Europe focused on peasants—people thought to more closely resemble the ancestors of the current inhabitants. One of the aspects that drew these early European scholars to study peasants was the idea that peasants lived closer to nature and were more in tune with the natural environment. Culture was thought to advance in an evolutionary way (a notion since discarded by most scholars), with advances in culture leading people away from nature. Therefore, early researchers spent much time collecting items of peasant folklore that dealt with the natural environment.

In the twentieth century, folklorists began to study folklore not as a survival of some past way of life, but as an integral part of people's contemporary lives. This shift was influenced by the rise of social sciences, particularly anthropology, from

the beginning of the twentieth century. Many scholars started to examine folk narrative in particular as a way for people to negotiate the relationship between the natural, the cultural, and the supernatural worlds. Joseph Campbell, in his influential (if outdated) book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, discusses the folkloric monster as something that crosses the normal boundaries between these categories: “By a monster I mean some horrendous presence or apparition that explodes all of your standards for harmony, order, and ethical conduct” (222). The reason the monster existed in folklore was to come to terms with apparent violations in commonly understood norms in the environment. Others have looked at folkloric symbols and found harmony, not conflict, between the realms of nature and culture: “The Green Man, as a composite of leaves and a man’s head, symbolizes the union of humanity and the vegetable world. He knows and utters the secret laws of Nature” (Anderson 1990, 14). Etiologies, or stories explaining the origins, of places, names, and traditional activities relating to the environment have been collected across the globe. Folklorists have paid attention to the relationship between human and environment in other realms of folklore beyond just narrative. The study of material culture especially has looked at human manipulation of the environment by examining how people use wood, bone, stone, vegetation, and more to make everything from musical instruments and tools to clothing and dwellings.

More recently, from the later twentieth century to today, folklore has found new relevance as people’s attitudes toward the natural environment have shifted. The rise of environmentalism as a social movement has caused many people to question the ways humans have interacted with the environment, especially since the advent of industrialization and globalization. The environmental movement of the 1970s and 1980s largely assumed a complete division between the natural environment and human action. People were a destructive force, and environmentalism’s cause was to stop the destruction of the natural world by removing or preventing human activity. As the environmental movement matured, however, the rhetoric moved from preservation to conservation. The natural world was not a bubble into which people were an intrusion. Rather, humans were a part of the natural world, and the long-standing relationships of people and the environment started to be acknowledged as useful. Mary Hufford is perhaps the most prominent folklorist studying these relationships. She describes folklore’s ability to focus “on what we might call the vernacular management and interpretation of resources—cultural as well as natural. What are all the possible relationships between people and natural resources? How are these relationships formalized? How do ‘guardians of the landscape’ name, classify, and transform the land and its resources?” (1988, 227) Folklorists, trained in collecting and interpreting folk or vernacular knowledge, are able to contribute to current conversations about how to protect the living environment. The authority given by an academic discipline allows folk knowledge to have a place at the table that it previously did not have: “When

biologists use only Latin names or official English names for flora and fauna [. . .], they cancel out the hard-won authority of local people over their environments” (Hufford 1988, 222). By recognizing the hard-won authority that comes with intimate experience, folklorists are able to put vernacular knowledge on a closer footing to knowledge from biology and other hard sciences.

The idea of folk knowledge being useful to environmental questions has moved beyond just the discipline of folklore in the twenty-first century. Biologists and anthropologists have begun to explore, individually and together, the relationship of humans and the natural world, creating new categories of study called variously folk biology, ethnobiology, or ethnoecology. These new areas of study recognize that “much of human history has been spent (and is being spent) in intimate contact with plants and animals, and it is difficult to imagine that human cognition would not be molded by that fact. [. . .] People’s actions on the natural world are surely conditioned in part by their ways of knowing and modeling it” (Medin and Atran 1999, 1). As discussions around the environment become more complex, different disciplines with different points of view are coming together. Various groups are recognizing that they each have pieces of the puzzle, and that sharing those pieces with one another provides a clearer and fuller picture. The current discourse almost removes the divide between nature and human altogether, stating more simply that “natural habitats are also folklife habitats” (Hufford 1988, 225).

Michael Lange

See Also Celtic Folklore and Mythology; Material Culture; Myth; Romantic Nationalism.

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Ephemera

Wide range of minor, everyday documents usually intended for onetime or short-term use. Examples of ephemera include postcards, broadsides and posters, baseball cards, tickets, bookmarks, and photographs. The amount of use of ephemeral



Vintage Valentine's Day card, ca. 1940s. (Julie Crea)

objects is based on the quality of the object, meaning the material does not last forever, or the use is for a particular event.

The first account of the making of ephemera occurred in the 1720s in Great Britain and its colonies. The wooden printing press was the main way to print ephemera during this time. In order to make ephemeral objects, two people were required to operate the press. One person transferred the image onto a sheet of paper by putting the image in relief, which means the image is at a higher point than the background, and the image comes into contact with the paper through an inking process. The other person makes the paper into sheets with a pressure plate normally 12 inches x 18 inches. The wooden press would remain in use for almost one hundred years, until the creation of the iron press.

The iron press substituted the need for more manpower with advanced technology. The sheet that was printed was placed on a parchment covered tympan. The tympan was supported by steel points and a paper covered frisket, which was cut so it did not cover portions of the sheet to be printed. During printing, the type form was inked and the carriage was brought under the pressure plate. The pressure plate was lowered from a combination of levers and a beam, which produced the image on the paper. In addition to the iron press, the concept of lithography and steam power also affected the printing of ephemera.

Lithography represented the continuing evolution of printing ephemera from wood to metal. Lithography was developed by Jacob Perkins, a native of Philadelphia who used steel to print ephemera rather than wood. The lithographic handpress made ephemera when the stone was dampened and inked. The paper was then laid on the

tympan and lowered, and this was then pushed beneath the part of the machine known as the scraper. Next, the bed was lifted, which brought the tympan into contact with the scraper, and then the stone was cranked through the press. Because lithography used steel for the plate, this type of printing was also known as siderography.

The introduction of steam power to the printing of ephemera replaced the need for manual labor with a basic knowledge on how to work machinery. The main machine used to print ephemera driven by steam was the stop-cylinder machine. The paper ready for printing was first stacked on the feed board. The form of the type was then pressed between inking rollers and the impression cylinder, which rotated counterclockwise. After a brief halt, the paper would go into cylinder grippers. When the motion resumed, the paper came into contact with the type and was transferred onto and over the take-off cylinder. The final process of the printing involved the sheet of paper transferred onto the flyers and delivery board.

During the twentieth century, the scarcity of paper resulted in the decline of paper ephemera and the rise of revolutionary types that defied tradition. During the 1930s, photography increasingly replaced paper ephemera. In addition, the invention of the computer in the 1970s allowed ephemera to become digitized. The production of ephemeral objects on the computer not only reduced the need for paper, but also broadened the horizons in which ephemera could be created.

Ephemeral objects have been used in a variety of ways throughout the history of the United States, which include rewards of merit in the educational system and as broadsides, particularly in the Pennsylvania Dutch culture. Rewards of merit signified the progress of pupil and the esteem of their teacher for hard work and dedication to school. The tradition of giving educational rewards has been a part of the American educational system for nearly three hundred years. Most merit rewards were pieces of paper, either printed or handwritten, and conveyed a potent message of the relation between the student and teacher. The student went to school, performed exceptionally, and received praises by the teacher for the hard work.

Giving rewards to students in the American educational system was not an original concept. The giving of prizes or rewards is as old as history. The first known school rewards imitated the giving of rewards from kings to loyal aristocrats or athletes at competitions. The first rewards of merit to survive in the United States convey the religious views of the time period. Many people in the United States were Puritans, who believed that lives were short and bleak. They also displayed an unsentimental view of childhood. The rewards of merit were also used to create a hierarchical order between student and teacher. The clear boss was the teacher, whom the children obeyed in order to receive rewards.

The result of the strict discipline of students was the creation of distinct groups. The students who received numerous rewards became known as the exceptional ones. Joseph Lancaster wished to address the needs of the unprivileged majority by creating monitorial schools because only the minority was taught basic skills

such as reading and writing. The result of the creation of monitorial schools was the debate in the philosophy of the rewards of merit, whether they should be used as emulation for honoring special students or encouragement for all students to strive for achievement.

The term *broadside* refers to a piece of paper with print on one side distributed to interested clients. The Pennsylvania Dutch used broadsides for cultural, religious, and political purposes. When Pennsylvania Dutch ancestors came to America, they created songs and ballads that represented their culture. The songs contained ephemera in them because they were used at specific, onetime events like dinner gatherings and church services. Many song broadsides praised the hard work of farmers in the culture. Broadsides were also used in the medical field of the Pennsylvania Dutch culture. The ephemeral objects were used to describe the three types of medicine in the culture: academic medicine, popular medicine, and native occult healing. In this case, ephemeron refers to the durability of the object. The economics of the Pennsylvania German culture were displayed by sale bills and advertisements. The ephemeral objects are used not only to display onetime events such as auctions or sales, but the quality of object is meant for only short-time use. Many of the sale bills, along with advertisements for other community events, were written in the dialect of the Pennsylvania Dutch culture of the time. A popular community event of the Pennsylvania Dutch culture written in native dialect was the “Liars Contest.”

The Pennsylvania Dutch used broadsides for a variety of religious purposes. In addition to writing hymns on broadsides that were significant to local religion, they were also used for house blessings, heaven letters, and religious rites of passage. House blessings were used as a means to protect the house from evil spirits. Each house blessing served as a unique event, which makes them ephemeral in nature. Heaven letters served the same purpose of house blessings, but on an individual basis. Broadsides were also used to recognize significant rites of passage such as baptism, confirmation, marriage, and death.

The Pennsylvania Dutch also used broadsides to communicate political beliefs. Around the time of the American Revolution, the Pennsylvania Dutch did not always participate in the political arena or in conflicts because they felt that they would be going against their faith and against a pledge to the government of England. The political and military broadsides reflected the views of the Pennsylvania Dutch. For example, in 1766 the Pennsylvania Dutch produced a broadside that hailed King George III of England. In spite of this, the Pennsylvania Dutch also created broadsides in German of the Declaration of Independence and the song “Yankee Doodle.” Broadsides only serve as one example of an ephemeral object, but all examples of ephemera share one common characteristic—they have a limited use and are common, everyday documents.

Brian Shinehouse

See Also Broadside Ballad; Pennsylvania Dutch Folklore.

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Epic

A collection of narrative poems of varying length that presents a specific universe of beliefs and occurrences of a people within the cultural context. Epics often have a central figure, a protagonist, whose adventurous life experiences form the substance of the epic narrative.

There are both written and oral epics. Literary epics are extended narrative poems that establish a particular universe of the imagination by means of, for example, cosmogonic mythologies and sacrificial ritual drama. Oral epics constantly change, but epics preserved in the written form have become records of particular worldviews, histories, and religious attitudes, such as *Mahābhārata*, *Shah-namah*, *Beowulf*, *Manas*, and the *Kalevala*.

In folkloristics, epic is a narrative couched in poetic language and subject to special rules of texture, structure, style, and form. Usually, epics contain hundreds or thousands of verses and present a complex narrative full of wonders and heroism, often centered around the exploits of a main personage. The generous use of stock phrases and conventional scenes explains how a performer can innovate and still adhere to the required poetic form. Innovations introduced by performers within traditional epic frameworks lead to many different versions of the same narrative. Great variability occurs because different performers assemble different episodes within a given epic—not only because individual passages are expanded, contracted, or altered. Epics may remain in traditional circulation longer than other oral poetry. Even when particular epics disappear, their substance is either cannibalized for later epics or transformed into, for instance, folktales.

All types of epics—classical or folk, literary or oral, long or short—are directly related to worldview. The epic characteristically involves its audience in the fundamental issues of human existence, such as evil and good, suffering and reward, guilt or innocence, human nature and its destiny, and the origin and destruction of the cosmos and the people in it. Epics often are dramas of violent conflicts between the human and divine worlds, and as such, they often pose problems of history, theology, fate, death, regeneration, and salvation. For this reason, epics are dominated by protagonists whose destinies reinforce essential

religious concepts. Such concepts materialize in the roles of the hero or heroine as shaman or warrior, in certain concepts of space, order, time, and deity, as well as in fundamental interpretations of the meaning of death and salvation.

The theme of the shaman who travels to the netherworld and establishes defenses against the evil forces that impinge on the human world is less common, however, than the theme of the warrior in the world of the living who conquers not by supranormal powers but by such qualities as strength, courage, and personal honor. Certain theories developed in the comparative analysis of myth may explain this widespread tradition. Comparative studies have suggested the religious significance of a proto-Indo-European warrior tradition and have argued that the warrior occupies an important median position in a three-class human social hierarchy.

Another prevalent epic theme describes founding the world anew: reestablishing world order, time, and space by means of the holocaust of battle. Narratives turn into epics when, drawing on the poetic power of the blood shed by popular heroes or heroines, they serve as the songs of peoples who are striving to establish national or ethnic identities, to legitimize traditions of particular places and events, and to validate authority.

The Finnish epic the *Kalevala*, compiled and edited by Elias Lönnrot (1802–1884), serves to illustrate these epic features. This epic presents a more unified interpretation of the history of the world than do the Finnish folk narratives from which Lönnrot drew. Utilizing a variety of folk materials, he developed a narrative that proceeds from primal creation to destruction of the supreme god, Väinämöinen. In Lönnrot's nineteenth-century Lutheran Christian worldview, the *Kalevala* described the “good” pagan Finnish prehistory before the advent of Christianity; the latter, of course, was considered the high point of “real history” (i.e., Western European academic history). The *Kalevala* ends with the victory of the Christian faith over the pre-Christian religion of the ancient Finns. As a consequence, the pagan myths of the epic are arranged according to the Christian linear concept of time and history, a concept in which time is seen as a segment of a line with beginning and end points and in which God creates the world but then withdraws to appear again during the eschatological events that end the world. Though the structure of the epic is fundamentally Western and Christian, the worldview of the rune singers is cyclic. Nevertheless, the *Kalevala*, like epics in general, provides an ethnic and historical reference point that validates identity and solidarity within the group.

Even outside their original contexts, the epics of many peoples have proved to be universally appealing. During the performance of epics, channels open to a more pliable time and space; thus, the primal “drama of transformation” itself becomes a powerful means of renewal.

Juha Pentikäinen

See Also Bard; Culture Hero; Hero/Heroine, Folk; Myth; Oral-Formulaic Theory.

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Epic Laws

Superorganic and transcultural “laws,” which give rise to the traditional structure of narratives. The concept of epic laws was introduced by Danish scholar Axel Olrik, who formulated eighteen such laws at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Although the Norwegian folklorist Moltke Moe introduced, in 1889, the concept of fundamental epic laws to denote the operative forces in the process of traditional composition, the scholar who focused particular attention on the question of regularities in narrative formation was Olrik, who developed the theory of epic laws in narration in 1908. Olrik argued that, cross-culturally, narrative tradition is governed by universally applicable rules; he made a departure from the terminology of his time to employ the concept of *Sagenwelt* (world of folk narrative, folk-tale world) to characterize the cross-culturally applicable rules that operate within folk narratives. Although Olrik agreed that particular national traits also exist in narrative, he believed that, in comparison with general regularities, these variations were analogous to differences in dialects. Olrik stated that these principles were termed laws because they limited the composition of oral literature by means of a strict set of rules.

The first rule concerns the formalized opening and closing sentences that begin and end narratives (the Law of Opening and the Law of Closing). The Law of Repetition concerns the reiteration that occurs at many levels; for example, events, dialogues, phrases, and single words are often repeated three times, thus forming a kind of rhythmic emphasis at different structural levels. The Law of Three alludes to the fact that, for instance, there are three tasks or that a task is performed in the course of three days. According to Olrik's theory, there are usually only two people occupying the narrative's “stage” at one time (the Law of Two to a Scene). Opposed character types come into confrontation: protagonist and villain, good and bad, rich and poor (the Law of Contrast). The weakest and youngest proves in the end to be the strongest and cleverest (the Importance of Initial and Final Position). The Law of Action means that characteristics are not

described by means of a series of adjectives but in terms of deeds and events whose content should indicate concretely the characteristics of the personage described. According to Olrik, the Sage (local legend, plural Sagen) follows its own textural norms, which differ from those that govern written literature; these rules of oral narrative are called the Law of the Single Strand, the Logic of the Sage, and so on.

The way in which Olrik set forth his laws indicates that he considered them to be universally true, irrespective of time, nationality, or culture. Epic laws were, he believed, superior to and in control of the individual narrator. Olrik's epic laws, therefore, were superorganic. The essence of this notion is that, in addition to the organic level that is controlled by man, there is also a superorganic level that is beyond human influence but that largely governs human behavior. Olrik felt that the narrators obey epic laws blindly and unconsciously. Carried to the extreme, this view of the significance of epic laws might lead one to underestimate the individual and social component in the narrative cycle. A competent tradition bearer, however, not only reproduces previously learned material but also, according to mastered rules, transforms familiar elements into new performances.

Many of Olrik's observations are undoubtedly of considerable value for studying folk prose, and his hypotheses may be applicable to other genres as well. It should be emphasized that Olrik's arguments were based on studying texts and not on the analysis of the communication process itself. Scholars should try to discover the unwritten rules of communication for each particular genre; Olrik's laws should be studied as hypotheses, taking into account the differences between genres and the nature of the holistic communication process as both an individual and a social phenomenon.

Olrik maintained that epic laws are superorganic and transcultural. This is highly improbable. It would be more correct to say that they are conventional patterns of composition, varying among different genres and within different cultural areas. Moreover, Olrik's epic laws focus on a range of different qualities. They may be stylistic commonplaces or statements of details of style, form, content, or structure, to which certain analogs may be added by continuing to analyze techniques of narrative performance.

Juha Pentikäinen

See Also Aesthetics; Superorganic Theories.

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Erotic Folklore

Traditional and emergent sexual practices and representational practices that are expressive of love, desire, and sociosexual relations. Erotic folklore and folklife encompass the sexual acts we engage in, our beliefs about those acts and the bodies we perform them with, the language (both literal and figurative) we use to articulate our desires and fears, the material erotic objects we make, and the stories, jokes, rhymes, songs, gestures, and games we perform. Erotic folklore constitutes the entire domain of that which is variously identified as “romantic,” “bawdy,” “vulgar,” “obscene,” “pornographic,” or simply “the dirty bits,” each



Detail of Vishnavath Temple, Khajuraho, India. The temple, part of the Khajuraho Group of Monuments and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is well known for its erotic sculptures. (Aleksandar Todorovic/Dreamstime.com)

expression being indicative of a differently situated politicized aesthetic concerning the body and its sexualities, as well as a response to degrees of sexual explicitness in representational practices. As a physical, emotional, psychic, and intellectual creative power and as a form of discourse, the erotic is the product of both the essentialist needs of our bodies and the cultural representations that construct those needs and those bodies.

Cultural theorists of the 1980s and 1990s, such as Michel Foucault, Sherry B. Ortner, Harriet Whitehead, and Thomas Laqueur, argue that the body and its sexualities, like gender, are sociocultural constructions, that the terms and dynamics of sexual desire are a political language, and that representations of desire are forms of political power. Thus, one way to view erotic folklore is as a rhetoric that seeks to construct sociocultural relations by traditionalizing and thereby naturalizing extant or emergent power relations. As a political language and a political power, erotic representational practices may be used to construct and reinforce hegemonic interests (those of dominant sociocultural groups) or to construct and reinforce the variant interests of differing folk groups, localized communities, imagined communities, and subcultures.

At once participatory in and contestive of public rhetorics, erotic folklore is, as Horace Beck says, “part of every society. Its form, its degree of prevalence set one group off from another.” And as Gershon Legman argues, erotic folklore stands in relation to the larger corpus of various peoples’ folklore “in about the same proportion as the physical sexual parts stand [in relation] to the body,” if not more. He suggests the figure of about 22 percent. Yet until recently, as Legman repeatedly notes, “the record of erotic folklore . . . has only seldom—and then usually only privately—been committed to print” due to private and public censorship. To censor is to erase, and the erasure of erotic folklore from public discourse is a form of political control of bodies (both one’s own and those that may differ from one’s own in respect to gender, class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and nationality). Furthermore, censorship distorts one’s view of what it means to be human. As Vance Randolph cogently notes, “If a collection of folksongs [and by extension, folklore in general] contains no obscenity, it cannot fully reflect the taste and preference of the people.”

One way in which people encode their “taste and preference,” while seeking to construct their own and others’ lives, is through language usage. Diction level and choice of metaphors, even in a very small sample of the English erotic lexicon of a particular sexuality, are quite suggestive. Heterosexuals, for example, may “copulate,” “fornicate,” “sleep together,” “have conjugal relations,” “make love,” and engage in “coitus.” In other words, they “do it”—“it” being “the act” or the “Big F”—which has also been known as “nigging” (1565–1820); “bulling,” “tiffing,” and “quiffing” (eighteenth century); “nubbing” (eighteenth and early nineteenth century); “hogging” and “tomming” (nineteenth century); “grinding,” “getting a valve job,” or “getting an oil change” (nineteenth and twentieth century); and

“putting your floppy in someone’s disk drive” (twentieth century). Similarly, the male genitalia—the “penis,” “privy part,” “prick,” “whang,” or “whacker”—which is frequently envisioned as the active agent, may be provided with a “Christian” name (“Peter,” “Dick,” or “John”) or euphemized as a man’s “third leg” or as one of various “tools” and “instruments.” The female body and female genitalia are envisioned, most frequently in the passive mode, as, for example, a landscape to be cultivated, an instrument to be played, or a fruit to be harvested. The extent to which such language usage constructs a system of gender dominance has been noted by many, but just as language may be used to construct dominant ideologies, it also can be used to deconstruct and contest assertions of dominance. This idea is hinted at (either intentionally or unintentionally) in the recuperative language of the title of Barbara Babcock’s essay “Taking Liberties, Writing from the Margins, and *Doing It* with a Difference” (emphasis added)—a feminist disclosure of male uses of the female body as a semiotic object.

Similarly, plastic and visual art objects, both those for everyday use and otherwise, encode a variety of human erotic acts as well as cultural attitudes toward those acts. For example, a pre-Columbian Andean culture, the Moche (or Mochica), crafted pots that were decorated with three-dimensional body parts (penis and vulva) and with three-dimensional subjects caught in various erotic positions: conventional heterosexual intercourse, heterosexual anal intercourse, male homosexual anal intercourse, lesbian digital stimulation of the vagina, fellatio, cunnilingus, male masturbation, and zoophilia. Although the erotic has been associated with the spiritual in many cultures (for example, in ancient Greece and Persia), artifacts like the Moche stirrup-spout pots suggest the ways that the erotic can simultaneously be a source of a more worldly humor—in this case, the drinking spout configured as a penis or a vulva requires that the drinker perform a type of displaced fellatio or cunnilingus in order to quench his or her thirst. Analogously, the margins of medieval European manuscript pages were sometimes decorated with figures engaged in a variety of erotic acts, and forms of twentieth-century photocopy and fax lore provide graphic visual representations of erotic fears and pleasures.

And what our linguistic lexicons and our art objects encode, our sex manuals (ancient and modern), conduct books, collections of literary and vernacular tales and songs, and inscriptions of folklife elaborate on. Sex manuals, for example, circulated in China as early as the second century BCE, Rome had Ovid’s *Ars Amatoria* by the end of the first century BCE, and India produced the *Kamasutra* sometime between the third and fifth centuries CE. Each is a complex mixture of public and folk practice and fantasy that, to varying degrees, is inflected by theological and ideological prescription. During the Middle Ages, bawdy folktales were appropriated for literary use (*The Arabian Nights*, Boccaccio’s *Decameron*, Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*). Also, early modern Europe transmitted sexual practices and fantasies through (among other genres) song, both in oral performance

and print; examples may be found in Thomas D'Urfey's *Wit and Mirth, Or Pills to Purge Melancholy* (1719–1720) and Vivian de Sola Pinto and Allan Rodway's *The Common Muse: An Anthology of Popular British Ballad Poetry, XVth–XXth Century* (1957). Additionally, books such as *Aristotle's Masterpiece*, an anonymous compendium of information drawn from earlier printed sources and period folklore and first printed in the late seventeenth century, documented early modern beliefs concerning the body, its genders, and its sexualities.

Western modernity has had its Freudian case studies, its Kinsey reports, and the work of Havelock Ellis and of William H. Masters and Virginia E. Johnson. A myriad of popular articles frequently linking sex, etiquette, and domestic and public economy have appeared in women's and men's magazines. Oral historians, such as Steve Humphries, have recorded vernacular personal narratives about the heteroglossic erotic life of a nation during a specific historical period. Similarly, cultural anthropologists Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy and Madeline D. Davis have used women's oral histories to document the life of a particular sexual community in Buffalo, New York, from 1930 to 1960. Other anthropologists have inscribed the erotic life of diverse cultures and subcultures: Owen M. Lynch's *Divine Passions: The Social Construction of Emotions in India* (1990); Richard Parker's *Bodies, Pleasures, and Passions: Sexual Culture in Contemporary Brazil* (1991); *Ritualized Homosexuality in Melanesia*, edited by Gilbert Herdt (1984); Will Roscoe's *The Zuni Man-Woman* (1991); and Esther Newton's, *Mother Camp: Female Impersonators in America* (1979).

In turn, folklorists have focused on various representational practices. For example, collected folktales as well as folksongs and ballads (although sometimes elliptical, particularly when "adapted" for public consumption) encode various peoples' attitudes toward the body, sexuality, and hierarchical social systems based on class and gender. Different textual traditions and situated performances of "Cinderella," "Little Red Riding Hood," "Beauty and the Beast," and "Bluebeard," for example, at once assume and construct heterosexuality as a cultural norm while exploring, according to differently situated scholarly interpretations, the erotic in children's developing sexualities, the relationship between sex and violence, incest, and the erotic attraction of the gender-ambivalent cross-dresser. Similarly, romantic songs and ballads construct heterosexual and homoerotic relations while sometimes documenting various cultural-specific erotic taboos. For example, in Anglo-American ballads of domestic tragedy, sibling incest is invoked in versions of "Lizzie Wan," "The King's Tochter Lady Jean," "Bonny Hind," "The Cruel Brother," "Babylon," and "Sheath and Knife."

Folktales and their popular redactions in particular have been critiqued by Western feminist scholars Marcia Leiberman, Kay Stone, and Jane Yolen as misogynistic constructions of female gender, female sexuality, and cross-gender relations, as well as for their production of an erotic economy based on the mystique of

romance and female domesticity. However, scholars also have suggested that such tales, when contextualized by specific performance frames, may be negotiated by women for their own purposes. Finally, such tales also have been analyzed as sites for the disclosure of male fears of both female and male sexuality.

Other textual and performance traditions revel in graphic sexual representation and witty euphemism. Although publicly censored (for example, the blank space that potentially categorized sexual themes in the Stith Thompson *Motif-Index* was not redressed until Frank Hoffmann began the task in 1973), sexually explicit folklore not only survives but also thrives, providing, as do the trickster figures of bawdy tales, important forms of psychological and cultural renewal. As social theorist Mikhail Bakhtin has argued, bawdry—with its emphasis on the “grotesque” material body—is at the heart of cultural deconstruction and renewal: “The essence of the grotesque is precisely to present a contradictory and double-faced fullness of life. Negation and destruction (death of the old) are included as an essential phase, inseparable from affirmation, from the birth of something new.” In this way, bawdy stories (folktales, as well as personal narratives, anecdotes, and contemporary legends), poems, jokes, songs, ballads, blues, graffiti, gestures, and toasts encode attitudes toward the body and the erotic while using representations of the body and the erotic for purposes of psychological release, group and dyadic bonding, and sociopolitical commentary.

As editor of *Kriptadia: The Journal of Erotic Folklore* and author of *The Horn Book: Studies in Erotic Folklore* (1964), *The Rationale of the Dirty Joke* (1968), *No Laughing Matter: Rational of the Dirty Joke, Second Series* (1975), *The Limerick* (1964), and *The New Limerick* (1977), as well as innumerable articles, prefaces, and introductions, Gershon Legman has been, in the twentieth century, the leading bibliographer and editor of sexually explicit folklore. But of particular importance for folklorists are the field collections of scholars such as Vance Randolph, whose *Pissing in the Snow & Other Ozark Folktales* (1976), *Roll Me in Your Arms: “Unprintable” Ozark Folksongs and Folklore*, Volume 1 (1992), and *Blow the Candle Out: “Unprintable” Ozark Folksongs and Folklore*, Volume 2 (1992), when contextualized within Randolph’s entire collected corpus, bawdy and non-bawdy, offer what Rayna Green has described as “a picture of expressive behavior unparalleled by any other American region’s or group’s study.”

Although Randolph’s field collections record the erotic representational practices of a particular region during a particular time, other scholars have focused on different communities and various genres. Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger’s *Travellers’ Songs* (1976) records, in the context of a broad singing tradition, the bawdy songs collected primarily in Scotland from a specific social and ethnic group, and Guy Logsdon’s *The Whorehouse Bells Were Ringing* (1989) documents the bawdy song tradition of a specific occupational group (American cowboys). Roger Abrahams’s *Deep Down in the Jungle: Negro Narrative Folklore*

from the Streets of Philadelphia (1964) situates a localized racial community's representational practices within their immediate sociocultural context, and Bruce Jackson's *Get Your Ass in the Water and Swim Like Me* (1974) records and analyzes African American toasts (recitations and brags). Rayna Green's "'Magnolias Grow in Dirt': The Bawdy Lore of Southern Women" (1977) decenters any notion that "trashy talk" is limited to male performers, and Joseph P. Goodwin's *More Man Than You'll Ever Be* (1989) not only contextualizes erotic representational practices within a particular sexual community (Midwestern American male homosexuals) but also explains how members outside of that community may misunderstand its representational practices. And Wendy Woenstein, Mary and Herbert Knapp, and Sandra McCosh have recorded children's erotic jokes, rhymes, riddles, games, catches, and pranks.

Psychoanalytic approaches to bawdry, particularly those stemming from the works of Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), explore the ways in which sexual humor functions variously as seduction, aggression, and exposure. Such approaches have been foregrounded in Legman's work as well as that of Martha Wolfenstein's and Alan Dundes's analyses of a wide-ranging collection of cultural phenomena: photocopy lore, oral jokes, folktales, sacred stories, children's toys and rhymes, and even the Easter Bunny. Among Dundes's classic articles are his study of heterosexual homoeroticism in the game of American football and his study of male pregnancy envy, anal eroticism, and ritual homosexuality in aboriginal Australia, native North and South America, Africa, Europe, and the United States in respect to a sacred ritual object and secular toy—the bullroarer.

An alternative to the psychoanalytic approach to erotic materials has focused on localized folk performances whose meanings are contextualized within specific sociocultural relations of a specific time and place. An important study in this respect has been Margaret Mills's *Rhetorics and Politics in Afghan Traditional Storytelling*. Inscripting an evening of storytelling by two Muslim elders who were brought together by a Marxist subgovernor so that an American woman might record their performances, Mills's book offers a record of a situated and contextualized performance in which bawdry is used as a means of establishing a homosocial bond between the storytellers and their all-male audience. The men in this audience are distinctly contestive of sociocultural and hence ideological influences that emanate from outside their worldview (that of both the Marxist subgovernor and the American female folklorist). Similarly, Cathy Preston's "'Cinderella' as a Dirty Joke: Gender, Multivocality, and the Polysemic Text" addresses the function of gender and class in negotiating the way meaning is made of differently situated American performances of a bawdy joke.

Finally, folklorists—for example, Debora Kodish and the contributors to a 1990 special issue of *Southern Folklore*, "Folklore Fieldwork: Sex, Sexuality, and Gender,"—have begun to address the ways in which gender and sexuality

affect fieldwork relationships, as well as critiquing the ways in which ethnographers, in their write-ups of fieldwork, have eroticized the relationship between the ethnographer and the ethnographic subject. Among other things, they argue that older models of ethnography inscribed the erotics of colonialist conquest and penetration and that newer models explore the erotics of surrender and affiliation. Both models inscribe fantasies, and though the politics of metaphorical surrender may seem preferable to those of metaphorical rape, either fantasy may be appropriative of bodies other than one's own for one's own needs.

To the extent that the erotic (such as sexual bodies, genders, and sexualities) is a cultural construction, what is experienced as erotic, as well as the meanings attributed to erotic practices, may or may not cross cultural or historical boundaries. Furthermore, the erotic's representations of pleasure do not necessarily always translate as pleasurable when crossing gender, class, ethnic, racial, or religious registers even within the same culture—in part because such forms of representation and practice inevitably encode sociopolitical power relations and thus function as contestive sites of cultural production. In other words, what is pleasurable to one person in a particular performing context may be distasteful (or worse, if experienced as an expression of violence, dominance, and conquest) to another person in the same or a different performing context. Herein lies the dilemma in which arguments for censorship are embedded. The complexity of this issue is well illustrated by anthropologist Gayle Rubin, among others; from her groundbreaking 1979 essay on gender and sexuality, "The Traffic in Women," to her essay on hegemonic hierarchization of different sexualities, "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality," her work has consistently explored sexual and gender-based politics while defending the expression of sexual diversity.

Censorship—the product of conflicting class relations and changing constructions of gender, race, and diverse sexualities and nationalisms—involves the attempted public erasure and silencing of voices that are sometimes disruptive of traditional and emergent hegemonic interests. Inasmuch as theorists have argued that the public "production of specific forms of desire" creates and maintains "specific forms of political authority," the inscription of erotic folklore is imperative to our understanding of cultural differences and to our constructions of cultural and political histories.

Cathy Lynn Preston

See Also Joke; Obscenity; Scatology.

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Eschatology

Mythic narratives about teachings concerning the last things, the end of the world, the destruction of the old world, and the creation of a new world. In the religious traditions of mankind, eschatological texts differ greatly. Eschatological myths, theories, and stories that deal with the end of the universe are to be found in almost every society. These works give descriptions of the developments of the universe after the final catastrophe in varying styles, either in imaginative mythic narrative or in scientific formulas or the language of physics. Eschatological myths lay the ground for the ethical requirements of human existence, describing the future expectations and destiny of both mankind and the universe.

In prophetic religions like Parsism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, the end of this world implies entering into the realm of God. Based on this model, world and human history are unified and based on a linear model. In contrast, the Hindu philosophy of religion espouses a cyclical concept of time. The destruction of the world is expected to take place several times: The world will return to chaos again but will be created anew. Eschatological myths (e.g., "The Revelation of St. John") characteristically tell about the collapse of the firmament, floods, universal conflagration, terribly cold winters, bloody wars, and other horrors.

Myths are central to the religions of the world. They usually are held sacred in their cultures and are considered to be true explanations of the origins of the cosmos as well as the events related to both the genesis and the collapse of culture. They relate in detail how the world, humans, the animal kingdom, and central elements of culture were created, thus establishing the world order. These myths

are often incorporated into the present by means of rituals. In myths, religions offer provocatively different answers to people's "why questions." Myths, however, deal not only with the questions of origin but also with the end of the universe and destiny of man; therefore, a culture's cosmogonic and eschatological myths together form an essential fabric of the culture's worldview.

There is always a difference between reality as depicted in myths and the human, societal, cultural, and physical realities of the people that maintain these fundamental explanations about their human existence. The crucial difference between historical and mythic time interpretation is related to the model used for comprehending temporality. Historical time is linear, continuous, and composed of unique events, but mythic time is cyclical and repetitive. The latter encompasses and unites two temporal dimensions: the original time and the present. In traditional cultures, a wealth of myths are devoted to explaining the origin and destination of the universe. These myths can be categorized, respectively, as cosmogonic and eschatological myths that clarify the structure, function, and origin of time, as well as its end. The fundamental questions about the origin and destination of the universe are addressed in every human culture or community, without exception. Although the creation and the end of the universe and mankind are characteristically dealt with as elements of the myths of human cultures, very different promises and expectations are provided. In their efforts to locate the causes of variation, scholars have noted that there is a relationship among certain ecological settings or niches, worldview, and eschatological expectations and beliefs.

Juha Pentikäinen

See Also Cosmology; Myth.

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Esoteric/Exoteric Factor

Element in folklore that stresses a group's sense of its identity in relation to other groups. Coined by William Hugh Jansen, the set of contrasting terms has four dimensions. The esoteric factor in folklore refers both to a group's self-image

and to its perception of what people from other groups think of it. The exoteric factor includes a group's image of another group and its notions of what that group believes that image to be. Examples of folklore evincing the esoteric factor are origin myths and legends that relate an ethnic community's beginnings (for instance, emergence myths among some Native American groups in the Southwest) and jokes told by African Americans about white attitudes toward blacks. Folklore with strong exoteric tendencies is represented by ethnic jokes—those that offer actual characterizations of the targeted population and those that depict the population's alleged perception of the joke teller's attitudes.

Jansen believed that the esoteric/exoteric factor figures with particular prominence in the folklore of groups that demonstrate three features. Most important is isolation, whether the distancing factor be geography, religion, ethnicity and language, age, or some other marker of difference. A second contributor to a strong esoteric/exoteric component in a group's folklore is its being privy to knowledge and skills that seem especially arcane or specialized. Finally, Jansen suggested, groups that come to be regarded as especially prestigious or admirable may possess a pronounced esoteric/exoteric factor in their folklore.

Though Jansen himself viewed the esoteric/exoteric factor in folklore as pertinent to groups whose focus of identity might be occupational, religious, regional, or, in fact, related to any other distinguishing trait, most applications of his idea have occurred in the study of interethnic folklore, especially joking. Moreover, emphasis has most usually been directed at the exoteric member in the set of terms. Folklorists have, for example, defined a set of traits imputed to ethnic (and sometimes regional) others by mainstream culture in the United States: lack of efficiency, dirtiness, sexual promiscuity, inappropriate appetite, and laziness being some of the features that comprise a generic exoteric characterization. To these (and occasionally in place of some of them), particular features may be added to complete mainstream culture's exoteric view of a particular ethnic other. The Jew may be mercenary, the Scot may be stingy, the Italian may be cowardly, and the African American may be criminally violent, for example. Occasional studies have focused on exoteric depictions of mainstream culture and its participants from the perspective of ethnic minorities, one of the most developed presentations being Keith Basso's treatment of Western Apache skits depicting the "whiteman."

Some folklorists have recognized that ethnic jokes have esoteric as well as exoteric significance since the qualities imputed exoterically to the ethnic outsider stand in direct contradistinction to how the joke teller would characterize his or her own group, at least ideally. Consequently, the joke teller who mocks the laziness and inefficiency of the ethnic other also may be asserting a sense of his or her own group's qualities of industry and efficiency.

William M. Clements

See Also Ethnic Folklore; Joke.

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Ethnic Folklore

The traditional expressive behavior of ethnic groups as they migrate, resettle, and interact with other groups. Initially conceived of as the content of a distinctive ethnic identity—part of the constellation of cultural traits that together distinguish one group from another—ethnic folklore is now generally defined in terms of its role in the creation, maintenance, and negotiation of cultural boundaries between ethnic groups. A discussion of this shift in defining characteristics provides a theoretical history of ethnic folklore scholarship both in Europe and in the United States.

In Europe, the study of folklore actually originated in the political struggle of various groups for ethnic recognition even though they were affiliated with large empires. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, ethnic groups used various folklore forms to bolster their claims for national independence, becoming instrumental in the establishment of modern nations. Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm, Johann Gottfried von Herder, and other romantic nationalists encouraged the rise of national pride through the reinforcement of ethnic identity and the perpetuation of values they defined as "ethnic."

In Europe, ethnic groups are the result of many centuries of an uninterrupted, slow process of oppression, relocation, and transplantation. As Linda Dégh has pointed out in her survey of European ethnic folklore scholarship, "The Study of Ethnicity in Modern European Ethnology," these groups have necessarily been studied by ethnologists as historical formations and as parts of a European cultural continuum. European ethnologists have tended to analyze the folklore of these ethnic groups either as the products of regional dialect groups comprising a

general national culture or as the lore of alien minority groups, language islands, or colonies within nations. In the first instance, ethnographic field data are placed in the context of historical, geographical, ecological, and demographic factors believed to account for the specific combination of cultural elements that characterize the ethnicity of a regional group. Thus, *ethnic specifics*, local variations of national stereotypes, have been the focus of much of the research on the expressive culture of European ethnic groups.

Although research on the folklore of what Dégh has called “alien ethnic colonies” within larger European nations produced similar investigative strategies, the overall goal of that research was quite different. In fact, scholars often were completely disinterested in alien minorities such as itinerant Gypsy tribes or communities of eastern European Jews; the research of these scholars often supported assimilationist government policies. Historically oriented and profoundly influenced by Herderian nationalism, these ethnographers regarded the lore of emigrant colonies as the final vestiges of the national ideal. The Soviet school of ethnology provides one of the best examples of the justification of folklore research, especially research on ethnic folklore, for political reasons.

Likewise, in Germany, where World War I had both crippled the economy and deflated national pride, the study of ethnic folklore, grounded firmly in the heritage of the German Romantic Nationalists, became one of the most powerful tools of Nazi folk and race theorists. Focusing particularly on German ethnic groups in southeast Europe, agents of the Reich worked to organize individual communities as German nationals. Ethnic folklore research, then, was almost exclusively directed ideologically, toward imperialistic expansionism.

After World War II, a new generation of scholars finally came forward to critique the reconstructionism of traditional German *Volkskunde*. The postwar era provided these ethnographers with a rich variety of contexts for the study of German ethnic folklore as the resettlement of various groups began to take place. This focus on the processes of change that occur as ethnic groups interact became most prominent in European ethnology after the war, as ethnic group relocation between nations and internal migration became so widespread. In these contexts, studies of acculturation flourished, and folklore forms were analyzed as clear indicators of the acculturative process.

In Europe since the 1950s, the study of interethnic relations has grown into a special field. Community studies of areas in which several ethnic groups and/or nationalities interact have often included the analysis of folklore genres. In multiethnic regions of southeastern Europe, for example, a number of cooperative studies have produced careful folklore analyses of multilingual interethnic communities. Such studies have served to disturb the traditional definition of ethnic groups according to trait combinations since the research indicates that changing contextual factors continually disrupt the stability of those very combinations.

Blason Populaire

Brief characterization of a group of which one is not a member. Sometimes, *blason populaire* (literally, popular emblem) is used as a synonym for *ethnic joke*, but the term more accurately applies to the stereotype that informs the joke. Ethnicity has been the most usual factor in generating such out-group (or exoteric) folklore. But other kinds of out-groups (religious, geographical, or occupational, for example) may become the targets for pithy depictions; these, in fact, appear in a variety of folklore genres.

Perhaps the simplest form of *blason populaire* is the group nickname. Although they may communicate nothing specific in their characterizations of the groups they target, terms such as *nigger* or *spick* suggest derogation through their harsh, cacophonous sounds. Slightly more complex is the use of group names to characterize objects and behaviors (*Indian giver* or *French letter*). The *blason populaire* may also appear in traditional similes: “as tight as a Scotsman” or “like a Chinese fire drill.” In addition, proverbs can arise from *blasons populaires*: “A Swabian has no heart but two stomachs.”

Ethnic jokes and other narratives provide the opportunity for more developed use of the *blason populaire* in folklore. Such forms may assign particular characteristics to particular groups and play upon conventional stereotypes, such as that of the “dumb blonde.” But specific characterizations often rest on a foundation that seems to figure into *blasons populaires* in general: that of the Other, one whose most important traits stem from differentness from the group among whom the *blason populaire* circulates. Hence, in ethnic jokes in the United States, where such virtues as efficiency, cleanliness, and orderliness are valued, the target of exoteric folklore, no matter what the particular group, is depicted as inefficient, dirty, and disorganized. *Blasons populaires* often imply the lack of humanity of their targets. For example, when Europeans began to contact the indigenous peoples of the Western Hemisphere in the sixteenth century, they often depicted them as naked cannibals, their alleged eating habits and lack of clothing assigning them to subhuman status. During particular periods in a group’s history, members of the group may be the target of *blasons populaires*. During the last half of the nineteenth century, for instance, Irish immigration to the United States produced stereotypical depictions of Irish men and women in various media. Joke cycles occasionally center for a while upon a particular group. The next time the cycle comes around, the same jokes may target another group. *Märchen*, *novelle*, folk songs, and material culture also make use of *blasons populaires*.

Research into *blasons populaires* by folklorists has focused mostly upon their manifestations in ethnic jokes. Some studies simply have reported and cataloged the phenomenon, but others have delved more deeply into the sociological, historical, and cultural factors that generate the stereotypical attitudes that the *blason populaire* captures. Seldom have studies of *blasons populaires* examined how these exoteric characterizations emerge in performance, an important exception being Keith Basso’s investigation of depictions of the “whiteman” among Western Apaches. Sociologists and psychologists, who often rely on questionnaires rather than the ways *blasons populaires* occur in traditional culture, also have worked with these exoteric characterizations.

William M. Clements

The exploration of expressive culture in interethnic relations in Europe today focuses rather on the ways in which social interaction among ethnic groups and individuals produces a dynamic range of folklore forms that continually both maintain and create cultural traditions.

In the United States, many of the particular theoretical and methodological issues concerning ethnic folklore differ considerably from those of concern to European ethnologists. However, the folklore of ethnic groups has been a prominent concern of American folklorists since the very inception of the American Folklore Society (AFS). In fact, the 1888 AFS charter mentioned the traditions of Native Americans, African Americans, and other ethnically distinct communities as particularly appropriate sources of data for folklorists.

Like their European precedents, the first studies of the folklore of American ethnic groups were collections of “survivals.” The assumption behind these collections of songs, stories, superstitions, and other Old World forms was that these treasures would somehow be lost as soon as acculturation (specifically, linguistic acculturation) had taken place. The task of the folklorist, then, was to document these Old World traditions before they disappeared during the process of Americanization. Initially, British ballads, songs, and folktales were the foci of such studies, which concentrated on recovering these relics of British countryside traditions—especially in the upland South, New England, and the Ozarks. As Roger D. Abrahams has pointed out in his thorough discussion of the history of American ethnic folklore scholarship in the *Harvard Encyclopedia of Ethnicity*, a hierarchy of forms and even items was established in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but the actual collection of such items in North America was not carried out extensively until the 1920s and 1930s. These collections, several of them conducted under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration, focused primarily on determining the oldest and most widespread texts of ballads and folktales and estimating how widely they might be found and in what range of versions and variants.

A wide range of ethnic folklore research has been conducted employing this kind of antiquarian approach to the collection and analysis of ethnic lore of groups as diverse as Pennsylvania Germans, Louisiana French, and Southwestern Mexican Americans. Such studies have served primarily to document the conservative, traditional preservation of Old World ethnic traditions in these often isolated communities.

Studies of Native American folklore developed along somewhat similar lines. In the nineteenth century, the collection of Native American folklore, however, also was used to foster a kind of nationalistic sentiment. Native American lore was collected in order to identify distinctly “American” cultural roots that might serve to distinguish the young nation. These collections soon provided indexes of the rate of survival of Native American cultural forms since, unlike the study of

the folklore of Euroamerican ethnic groups, no previous baseline studies of pre-contact narratives, songs, and rituals were available.

Other scholars, particularly those studying Euroamerican folklore, combined similar collecting techniques with a somewhat different analytic perspective. In these studies, the collected texts served to index not only the degree of preserved ethnicity but also the degree of “assimilation” of the particular ethnic group. Conducted primarily in culturally conservative communities where ethnic distinctiveness was highlighted, this kind of ethnic folklore research compared the collected material to Old World repertoires in order to gauge the various stages in the process of acculturation. The clear assumption was that the more Americanized an individual ethnic group became, the fewer vestiges of Old World forms would remain and that, in time, ethnic differences in American culture simply would disappear. Following the work of early twentieth-century historians and social scientists interested in ethnicity, then, folklorists viewed ethnic communities as living laboratories in which the processes of assimilation and acculturation could be observed and analyzed firsthand. Such studies served to highlight the selective maintenance of traditional forms and practices within particular ethnic communities.

A similar perspective also has been used to suggest, however, that African and Native American repertoires or styles have been eliminated in the process of colonization. This deculturation perspective is most frequently identified with African Americanists E. Franklin Frazier and Robert Park, although it was maintained by other collectors of African American lore until well into the 1960s. Such a Eurocentric position has been rebutted easily by a number of prominent scholars, who have demonstrated a strong maintenance of African expressive forms, styles, and performance patterns in the United States. The work of Melville Herskovits has been particularly influential in formulating a more complex model of the ways ethnic folklore forms function as indicators of degree of acculturation. Herskovits has distinguished three modes of continuity and adaptation: *straight retention*; *reinterpretation*, in which forms are maintained in new environments with new uses and meanings; and *syncretism*, in which similar elements of two or more cultures merge. This attention to the cultural dynamics of intergroup contact in which expressive forms change and emerge redirected scholarly attention away from folklore items themselves and toward an analysis of the various factors affecting the use of these forms as displays of ethnicity.

Most twentieth-century folklore studies on ethnicity have focused on the changes in ethnic groups and their lore that came about as the result of culture contact. In 1959, in his influential *American Folklore*, Richard M. Dorson formulated a set of questions that served as guidelines for folklorists interested in the lore of ethnic groups for at least the next ten years: “What happens to the inherited traditions of European and Asiatic folk after they settle in the United States



Feast of the Epiphany in Tarpon Springs, Florida, in 2006, the 100th year of the celebration since the founding of its Greek Orthodox community. (AP/Wide World Photos)

and learn a new language and new ways? How much of the old lore is retained and transmitted to their children? What parts are sloughed off, what intrusions appear, what accommodation is made between Old Country beliefs and the American physical scene? These are the large questions that confront the assessor of immigrant folk traditions.”

Many folklorists took up Dorson’s call for studies of immigrant traditions and answered these questions. A fine example of such acculturation studies is Robert Georges’s work with the Tarpon Springs, Florida, Greek community, in which he analyzes the ways narratives, rites of passage, and holiday celebrations help to maintain the traditional belief system of these fairly isolated transplanted Greek fishermen. Georges demonstrates both the survival and reinforcement of Greek traditions in one small American community. Folklorists have continued to document both persistence and change in the ethnic traditions of immigrant groups. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett’s study of traditional storytelling in a Toronto Jewish community, Robert Klymasz’s study of Ukrainian folklore in Canada, and Elli Köngäs-Maranda’s analysis of Finnish-American lore, for example, document the various factors effecting change in ethnic traditions in the New World.

European models of ethnological research have formed the basis for the “acculturation model” research of folklorists such as Linda Dégh, who has called

for case studies that will provide an analysis of the assimilation process as it affects groups in contiguous and intermittent contact over a period of time. This process of “cultural adjustment” requires the observation of trans-generational folkloric expression as various ethnic groups come in contact with each other. Dégh has continually suggested that the determination of ethnic boundaries and the examination of intercultural borrowing should be the focus of research on ethnic folklore.

In this insistence on the analysis of the process of ethnic interaction, Dégh’s work is representative of the ways in which American ethnic folklore scholarship since World War II has moved away from a concern with “survivals” of Old World forms as the cultural content of ethnic groups and toward an understanding of the processes of ethnic boundary maintenance or negotiation. Like their European colleagues, American folklorists have drawn extensively on the work of Norwegian ethnographer Fredrik Barth in making this shift in theoretical emphasis. Barth’s 1969 *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* proposed an understanding and definition of ethnic groups based not on the identification of a cluster of culture traits for each particular ethnic group but rather on the *process* that a group and others use to separate and define the group itself. Barth argued that the focus for the analysis of ethnicity should be “the ethnic *boundary* that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses.” This simple but powerful notion of boundaries has proven to be one of the most theoretically useful concepts in clarifying the ways in which ethnic identity is articulated and actively negotiated in interaction within and between ethnic groups. Such a perspective points clearly to the influence of contextual variability on ethnic identity: As social, economic, and political conditions change, so may systems of ethnic identification.

Attention to the role of folklore in the process of boundary making was first articulated by William Hugh Jansen in his 1959 “The Esoteric-Exoteric Factor in Folklore.” Jansen discussed the range of factors associated with boundary making and maintenance as they are revealed in oral narrative. His work suggested that by examining the folklore of a group’s own self-image as well as that of its images of other groups, one might better understand the role folklore plays in the creation, negotiation, and maintenance of ethnic boundaries. Jansen’s work focused primarily on the ways in which folklore operates as a “function of shared identity,” binding groups together, but Richard Bauman has pointed out that differential identities and asymmetrical relationships also can be the basis for folklore performance. Américo Paredes has explored the relationship between “gringos” and “greasers” in the joking behavior of Mexican Americans as dramatizations of real social inequities. Roger Abrahams also has suggested that folklore performances may additionally operate as a means of distinguishing separate or even antagonistic segments within the same ethnic community, as Alan Dundes’s work on Jewish-American humor demonstrates.

As members of ethnic groups negotiate the construction, manipulation, and exploitation of boundaries between themselves and others, they draw on a wide range of cultural and linguistic resources in multiple cultural repertoires. In her 1983 essay “Studying Immigrant and Ethnic Folklore,” Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett suggested that a special feature of the folklore of ethnicity is a heightened awareness of cultural diversity and self-reflexivity, so that the relevant research questions become: “To what extent, how and to what effect is folklore used to make cultural comparisons and to mark cultural distinctiveness? How is folklore used to define cultural differences, incongruities and convergences? What are the nature and content of these comparisons, of this marking or foregrounding?” Attention to these questions required a shift from studying the lore of a particular named group to an examination of the settings, social occasions, and events in which boundary negotiation is an important activity.

Clearly, this shift in focus was at least partially a response to the new attention to folklore performance in the late 1960s and 1970s. With Dan Ben-Amos’s 1971 redefinition of folklore as patterned expressive communication within a group meeting together face-to-face came an emphasis on the folk *group* rather than on solely text-centered analyses and on the folklore *process* rather than product. For scholars interested in ethnicity, this particular theoretical move opened the discipline in new ways to serious considerations of the manner in which ethnic group members use folklore in the creation and maintenance of cultural boundaries. In addition, the concept of emergence proposed by Dell Hymes and Richard Bauman—that folklore forms, contexts, and performances are constantly emerging—helped to undermine the long-held assumption that ethnic folklore traditions gradually and inevitably erode and disappear. Instead, folklorists now concentrated on the creative, ever-changing ways in which ethnic groups and individuals display their own ethnic identities.

At the same time, rising ethnic consciousness within the United States in the 1960s and 1970s created an increasing public interest in understanding the dynamics of ethnic interaction. Folklorists sometimes found themselves in the position of “ethnicity brokers” as they became involved in the public display of ethnicity in a variety of festival settings, ranging from the Festival of American Folklife in Washington, DC, to small, local gatherings. Such festivals became means of dramatizing ethnic persistence in a particular region or community. The process of “going public” raised a whole new set of questions for both folklorists and members of ethnic groups, questions such as: What happens to folklore forms when they are performed within large heterogeneous groups that have come together only to be entertained, rather than within close, face-to-face, homogeneous communities with shared cultural values and expectations? What happens when ethnic identification becomes marketable? What is the effect on the ethnic community itself? Is the social base of ethnic folklore completely

undermined in such performance contexts? Or are these festival situations simply different occasions on which boundary negotiation takes place, new responses to ethnic persistence in a truly pluralistic society?

During the late 1970s and 1980s, American folklore scholars began to extend their analyses of ethnic groups and their lore to consider the wide variety of contexts in which ethnicity is constantly negotiated and renegotiated. Many of the articles in the 1977 special issue of *Western Folklore*, "Studies in Folklore and Ethnicity," edited by Larry Danielson, demonstrated this range of concerns.

Acknowledging that ethnic meaning arises only out of the social interactions of individuals whose expressions of ethnicity may be affirmed, contested, and/or celebrated by other participants, researchers began to examine the interactions of particular ethnic individuals. As Shalom Staub pointed out in *Yemenis in New York City*, "Ethnicity is therefore an identity which resides not within the individual person, or even the particular group, but *between* individuals and *between* groups engaged in social interaction." The 1991 collection of essays on ethnic folklore edited by Stephen Stern and John Allan Cicala, *Creative Ethnicity*, represented this new direction in ethnic folklore scholarship. Through an examination of the forms, symbols, strategies, and stylistic resources of the folklore performances in a variety of ethnic contexts, the authors attempted to demonstrate the richness and diversity of ethnicity as it is experienced on a dynamic, personal level.

Today, scholars interested in the folklore of ethnic groups no longer confine themselves to the task of documenting survivals and chronicling acculturation patterns. Instead, folklorists around the world attempt to take into account both the broad historical conditions that influence ethnicity and the factors affecting specific individual negotiations of ethnic identity as they are played out within particular social interactions. The analysis of creative expressions of negotiations of ethnicity is crucial to an understanding of the ways in which groups and the individuals who comprise those groups continually articulate and reshape the meaning of their own ethnic identifications.

Margaret K. Brady

See Also African American Folklore; African Folklore; Asian American Humor and Folklore; Chinese Folklore; Esoteric/Exoteric Factor; Japanese Folklore; Latino Folklore.

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Ethnoaesthetics

Study of the artistic communication and human creativity of a culture or group, incorporating both individual and communal ideas about what is “good,” “beautiful,” “artistic,” “appropriate,” and/or “well made.” As the term itself indicates, *ethnoaesthetics* is concerned with a group’s own perceptions about what is pleasing or beautiful. Scholars who pursue this study generally reject the notion that such values are universally determined, attempting instead to discover the characteristic cultural qualities inherent in the artistic expression of particular groups. From this perspective, such forms of communication constitute eloquent statements about how certain people think, live, and behave in distinct places and times, demonstrating both continuity and change in the way they view the world. Although the approach is seldom used in this manner, it could refer as easily to

the verbal arts as it does to the visual arts and would be quite productive in delineating the interrelationship between the two communicative processes.

Historically, the designation ethnoaesthetics has been employed more frequently by anthropologists than folklorists, indicating especially the cultural expressions of non-Western peoples, including those aptly described by Nelson Graburn as inhabiting “the fourth world,” that is, native peoples without countries of their own whose art is seldom manufactured for their own use. Whether they specifically adopted this terminology or not, folklorists began to apply the methodology consonant with this concept as they became more concerned with context, performance, and dynamic process, giving less credence to their former emphasis on isolated objects and texts that were often regarded as if frozen in time and generated anonymously. This new direction in folklore scholarship reflected a major shift in the discipline that took place in the mid-1970s, entailing a concentration on the individual rather than on broad generalizations, classifications of types, delineations of groups, and regional trends.

In folk art studies, the behavioral orientation is well represented by Michael Owen Jones’s wide variety of publications that demonstrate his interest in individual motivation, focusing on the material object as a means by which to illuminate the mind of a particular maker and user. Significantly, Jones, like anthropologists who study tourist art, explores appreciation as well as creation, considering the attitudes of both the consumer and the traditional artist. Jones’s influence is evident in a range of later publications whose authors began to question overarching assumptions about tradition and culture. John Vlach, for instance, directly acknowledges Jones’s intellectual contribution to his own research. In *Charleston Blacksmith: The Work of Philip Simmons*, Vlach examines the perpetuation of tradition in the urban environment, stressing the ways in which this environment actually encourages the retention of folk aesthetics and creative processes. Many of Simon Bronner’s numerous books and articles also situate studies of individual craftspersons within specific community, economic, and environmental contexts. Additionally, although his early regional and structural studies would hardly fall within this disciplinary shift, Henry Glassie’s *Passing the Time in Ballymenone* is exemplary in its attention to context, as well as its interweaving of the multiple verbal and visual expressive performances that occur in this folk community.

All of these studies have been the subject of controversy as well as admiration. Their emphasis on individual creativity is laudable, but their lack of attention to the politics of production is highly problematic. Too frequently, folk art scholars underscore the importance of aesthetics while neglecting critical aspects of social conflict and power relationships. Issues of race, class, ethnicity, gender, and sexual identity have yet to become central to this area of academic concern.

An extensive overview would reveal that the canon in folk art or folk material culture scholarship is composed largely of the publications of male folklorists

writing about male artists. The tacit assumption behind the existence and perpetuation of such an accepted body of scholarly works is that women neither study nor make the most significant forms of folk objects. Yet the most recent generation of folk art scholars comprises quite a number of women who have moved into the seemingly male-dominated and public realm of folk art study. But it is not the concentration on a specific category of folk art that distinguishes the scholarship of these women; rather, it is their endeavor to interrelate a variety of forms of artistic communication. Motivated by advances in feminist theory and performance theory, they have dissolved the traditional boundaries between verbal and visual expressive behavior, investigating the aesthetic principles that unite rather than separate these domains. It is this sort of research, conducted by scholars who sometimes designate themselves as folkloristic anthropologists, anthropological folklorists, or symbolic anthropologists, that fits most clearly within the ethnoaesthetic approach to human creativity. These innovative scholars include Barbara Babcock, Claire R. Farrer, Nancy Munn, and Barbara Tedlock, among others. They, in turn, have influenced their students and colleagues to analyze multidisciplinary, multivalent aspects of traditional artistic or symbolic behavior. Whether they explicitly describe this method as “ethnoaesthetic” or not, their approach constitutes one of the most productive directions in contemporary folk art studies.

M. Jane Young

See Also Aesthetics; Text; Tradition.

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Ethnography

A method of studying cultures in which researchers immerse themselves in ways of life to perceive them as they are lived and then recount and interpret their fieldwork to help their readers understand what it is like to be a part of the cultures studied. The four major types of ethnographies in the 1990s include the scientific, classical, and experimental ethnographies found within anthropology and folklore and ethnographies employed in research disciplines other than anthropology or folklore. The four approaches share a research methodology based on observing, recording, and, as fully as possible, participating in the daily activities of cultures and then writing accounts stressing descriptive detail. Each approach follows different literary conventions in reporting field experiences.

Scientific, classic, and experimental ethnography, the three primary approaches employed in folklore and anthropology in the 1990s, share an ancient history and method. Herodotus (484 BCE–425 BCE) wrote the first ethnography in anything like the modern sense, and in 1727, Joseph François Lafitau published his description of the Iroquois written from their point of view—the first modern field ethnography. Since Herodotus's time, many travelers, traders, missionaries, and government officials have conducted informal research among peoples and written about their experiences.

The word *ethnography* was first used in 1834 as a synonym for the then current term *anthropography*. Five years later, Harry R. Schoolcraft published his ethnography centering upon the folklore that he and his wife had collected from the Native American tribes of the eastern United States, and he published his best-known ethnography in 1848. This book, *The Indian in His Wigwam*, opened with an impressionistic account of Schoolcraft's first trip to the American West and ended with an Indian war song. Lewis Morgan wrote and published the first comprehensive field ethnography in 1851. Frank Hamilton Cushing, the first participant-observer in folklore and anthropology, lived in a Zuni pueblo from 1879 to 1884 and published a romantic account of the experience in *Century Magazine*. In 1888, Franz Boas published a field ethnography of the Baffin Island Eskimos. Alfred C. Haddon organized and led the first field ethnography team of trained observers in 1898.

All these early researchers were important in the development of ethnography, but Boas was arguably the most influential because, beyond his personal contributions to the field, he made Columbia University's Anthropology Department the most puissant training center for ethnographers in the United States during the first thirty years of the twentieth century. His students included Ruth Benedict, Ruth Bunzel, Melville Herskovits, Zora Neale Hurston, Alfred Kroeber, Robert H. Lowie, Margaret Mead, Paul Radin, and Leslie Spier; in 1926, every anthropology department in the United States was chaired by a former student of

Franz Boas. During the same period, English anthropology produced its own set of ethnographers who affected the form, including A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, Bronislaw Malinowski, and Edward Evans-Pritchard. These British ethnographers tried to demonstrate the efficacy of functional theory, whereas the Americans attempted to salvage the past and accepted functionalism later. Both groups, however, produced classic ethnographies. Malinowski's 1922 description of the ethnography method as "an attempt to grasp the native's point of view and see his world through his eyes" characterized the approach of both groups.

These early, classic ethnographies—also called realistic ethnographies because of their similarities to the realist movement in literature—were far from uniform, and some of them were innovative and experimental. As time passed, however, ethnographers developed an inflexible set of genre conventions that included the use of a third-person, omniscient point of view to present a set of topics in a set sequence, as well as the elimination of any references to the investigator.

This predictable pattern was broken in the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s by pressures from different directions. In the 1960s and 1970s, ethnoscience argued that ethnographers should bring the rigor of the scientific method to ethnography, urged the replacement of the nonstandard selection of information of classic ethnography with a more precise framework for data collection and interpretation, and developed statistical tools to achieve these goals.

In the 1980s and 1990s, other voices argued for making ethnographies more personal and literary. *Reflexive*, *interactive*, *postmodern*, *experimental*, and *narrative* are all terms used to describe the varied attempts during these decades to restructure ethnography as a literary genre. Most ethnographers of this period included the field researcher as a part of the field, used the first-person voice, and did not follow chronological order, and many of them experimented with novelistic techniques. Drawing inspiration from Schoolcraft, Cushing, Hurston, James Agee, and Hunter S. Thompson, and supported by the theoretical works of Clifford Geertz, David Schneider, Michael Owen Jones, Robert Georges, and many others, experimental ethnographers sought ways to include more direct representation of the experience of fieldwork itself into their written reports and to use writing to gain theoretical insights and more fully present the experience of other cultures.

Ethnography proliferated in the second half of the twentieth century in research fields other than folklore and anthropology. Nonanthropological, non-folkloristic ethnographers adapted and developed methodologies to fit their needs from scientific, classical, and experimental ethnographies.

Various critics attacked both classical and experimental ethnographies in the 1980s and 1990s as unscientific and scientific ethnographies as too subjective and nonreflexive. It is impossible to predict the future directions the form may take with absolute certainty. Considering the long and useful history of ethnographies, however, it seems highly likely that ethnography will continue as a major

research method and literary genre in some form—or forms—within folklore, anthropology, and other research fields.

Keith Cunningham

See Also Anthropological Approach; Fieldwork.

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Ethnology

In anthropology, the term *ethnology* describes the social, cultural, and psychological study of peoples. The letter “s” in the word *peoples* is significant, indicating that the subjects of ethnology are treated as groups rather than as individuals. In ethnological work these groups are usually regarded as tribal, ethnic, national, or other corporate social entities. Ethnologists study culturally determined practices and environmental ethics as part of interactive social and behavioral systems. Ethnography focuses on the descriptive study of cultures; it analyzes, classifies, and interprets problems arising from ethnographic knowledge. These may be comparative, theoretical, economic, social, or other kinds of questions. Ethnology thus tends toward the systemic and theoretical, while fieldwork-based ethnography is more local and informational. In practice, however, there is considerable overlap between ethnographic methods and ethnological theory. Thick description, artifacts, and other ethnographic data provide the empirical foundations of ethnological analysis.

Lowie (1937) defined culture as the aggregate of customs, habits, beliefs, skills, practices, and norms that individuals acquire, not through their own creativity or actions but from their societies and kin. Culture in this sense is an omnibus term meaning all that people learn at a conscious or unconscious level from others in their surroundings; at the same time, culture itself is made by individuals acting in concert. Franz Boas shifted the ethnological usage of the term away from the nineteenth-century meaning of “culture” as a universal human condition found at differing stages of development, toward the plural “cultures” as historically particular, unique, and local complexes. Talcott Parsons, following Max Weber, reinterpreted the concept of culture as a symbolic system. Methodological considerations of ethnography and ethnology include recognizing, gathering, and translating

ethnoscience knowledge to approximate a view of culture from the native viewpoint. Bronislaw Malinowski was the classic exponent of that approach, typically reached through fieldwork. Earlier Victorian “armchair” ethnology had been a museum-based discipline in which scholars usually stayed at home in Europe or America, analyzing collections of material culture and folklore brought back from “the field” by others. Following Boas and Malinowski, the emphasis shifted to the first-hand experience of fieldwork.

Classical ethnology placed particular emphasis on social organization through the study of kinship relations and analyses of myth and ritual. Originally conceived as an offshoot of the natural sciences, ethnology became a social science, but it tilted more toward humanism during the last three decades of the twentieth century. The discipline has frequently been caught up in the scholarly tension between a search for systematic conceptual theories, or predictive models of behavior, and inductive methodologies based on extrapolation from empirical data.

Ethnology, philosophically rooted in the eighteenth-century positivism of Auguste Comte, originally came to signify the discovery of psychological laws of humankind through the study of culture history. Nineteenth-century ethnologists such as Tylor and Morgan interpreted ethnology as a historical discipline. Although the remote past of antiquity was properly the domain of archaeology, these ethnologists focused on preliterate peoples in historical times in order to construct a natural history of man. To that end they adopted an evolutionary standpoint aimed at revealing successive stages of universal human development as observed in contemporary primitive societies.

One of the chief concerns around the turn of the twentieth century, when anthropology was becoming a professional discipline, was the explanation of similar cultural traits found in widely dispersed societies. For example, drills for making fire were formerly widespread throughout the world in countless local variations, working on the same principle. The diffusionists favored the spread of traits from a single origin as an explanatory principle over the possibility of independent invention. They regarded culture as contingent upon the particular migrations, explorations, intercourse, invasions, wars, colonizations, and other exigencies of history. Related languages, customs, behavioral traits, and material culture formed so-called culture circles (in German, *Kulturkreise*). These areal groupings were composed of associative bundles of related traits. Traits radiated outward in successive waves, from centers of so-called high civilization to the outer margins of their spheres of influence. The diffusionist principle of centrifugality held that these centers generated dynamic cultural changes internally; as their influence spread, the traits moved farther from the center, widening the circles like concentric ripples in a pond. Diffusionists postulated that the oldest cultural forms would thus be found as archaic remnant traits located at the periphery of the culture circle. For example, postcolonial Francophone societies in

Quebec, Louisiana, and the Caribbean have maintained many distinct local elements of language and culture rooted in old French forms that died out in Europe centuries ago.

The weaknesses of diffusionism as an ethnological theory and historical method included its bias against the possibilities of independent invention and its insistence on a top-down model of imperial cultural drift from the so-called high civilizations to the rest of the world's peoples, rather than a dynamic, interactive model of mutual influence and exchange. Diffusionists were unable to fully recognize human agency and the ingenious adaptive creativity that produces similar solutions to fundamental problems in widely varying environmental circumstances.

Adolf Bastian was a major figure in late nineteenth-century German ethnology. Bastian's concept of an underlying psychic unity of mankind was used against the polygenist racial formulations of the time, which sought to prove that human races were descended from different species. Boas, who had been schooled in the German tradition, was key to the development of an American style. He defined ethnology as "the science of the psychical phenomena of man considered as a member of society, not as an individual" (from the Franz Boas archives, American Philosophical Society Library, Philadelphia). When British anthropology was established as an academic discipline during the first decade of the twentieth century, it distinguished ethnology from sociology. Ethnology was to be the psychological branch of anthropology (also called anthropogeography), as the study of environmental influences on humanity and culture. Its purpose was the comparative classification of the world's peoples based not on physical characteristics but on "conditions of material culture, language, and religious and social institutions and ideas" (Kuper, 1996, 2–3). This school tended to favor diffusionist ideas, opposing the neo-Darwinian social evolutionists who schematized races of man in taxonomic hierarchies.

Twentieth-century British and French ethnology (or social anthropology) developed along somewhat different lines from U.S. ethnology (or cultural anthropology). Structuralism, functionalism, and structural-functionalism stripped away the past-oriented approach of historical reconstruction in favor of present models of living cultures as integrated systems. Cultures are represented as approximations of internally defined idealized social forms suspended in a timeless ethnographic present. This method has the advantage of self-contained explanation, not needing to refer to factors outside a culture to make sense of its practices and beliefs. Among its disadvantages are the possibility of yielding static, ahistorical representations. There is also the ever-present possibility that these ethnological categories, as abstract idealized forms, are in fact more the mental constructions of the anthropologist than internally verifiable ideas or principles indigenous to the cultures under scrutiny. The structural-functionalism of Radcliffe-Brown and Evans-Pritchard, at first closely tied to colonial administration, was a link between knowledge



Margaret Mead in Samoa, 1926, wearing a wedding dress woven by Makelita, last Queen of Manu'a. (Library of Congress)

and power in Africa and throughout the British empire. This approach elaborates the conceptual underpinnings of societies and cultures, stressing the importance and complexity of social organization, kinship relations, exchange, and ritual. During the 1960s, the French structuralism of Claude Lévi-Strauss, intellectually rooted in the sociology of Durkheim and Mauss and the semiological approach of Saussurean linguistics, brought a systemic, cognitive approach to the study of myth, ritual, and kinship. Structural analyses are based on principles of binary opposition in form and in psychological symbols.

American culture-historical ethnologists, led by Boas, relied on the inductive methodology of carefully observing and accumulating empirical data. They developed methods of delineating the unique aspects of each particular culture, without constructing broad, overarching, comparative theoretical frameworks. This resulted in a wealth of ethnographic knowledge, while limiting the synthesis of ethnological knowledge beyond the specific data pertaining to each society. The influential culture and personality school, which included Boas's students Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead, and Edward Sapir, focused on psychological factors in the individual's development in society, emphasizing the study of childhood, learning, family, and socialization. Sapir emphasized that the environment affects each person individually, and that culture is not a reified entity but the aggregate of separate human-environment interactions. Gregory Bateson was the son of William Bateson, a nineteenth-century biologist who coined the word *genetics*. The younger Bateson advocated the adaptation of deductive natural science

methods to the elusive problems of understanding psychological forms. Bateson's cybernetic model of communication applied natural biological principles of symmetry, as found, for example, in the morphological segmentation of arthropod limbs, to the formal analysis of continuously regenerated social structures.

The postwar theory of cultural evolution centered not on species evolution in the biological sense but on the view that progress in technology and the conversion of environmental resources into energy are deterministic of culture. Its founder, Leslie White, critiqued the Boasian paradigm for its lack of either grand synthesizing statements or a comprehensive ethnological theory of social organization. Boas's defenders countered with the argument that the lack of such generalization is precisely the strength of historical particularism, which seeks difference, or what makes each people and culture unique. Only after taking into account the diversity of human experience, knowledge, and practice, they contended, could broader principles of human society and culture be formulated. Cultural ecology, founded by Julian Steward, was an influential postwar school of ethnology. It ascribed a greater role to creative adaptation to environment, natural resources, and social factors than did the technological determinism of the cultural evolution school. Steward's theory of multilineal evolution made for a more open-ended and nuanced view than the nineteenth-century teleological formulas he called linear evolution, allowing for polyvariate results from similar causes and a more diverse branching of human cultural forms.

Both cultural evolution and cultural ecology extended the capabilities of the type of environmental ethnology begun during the early twentieth century by Alfred Kroeber, Robert Lowie, and Clark Wissler. They drew on the materialist economic determinism of Marx (although uncited during the height of the Cold War), in a return to the primacy of environment and economy over psychological and religious factors. This lineage led to several divergent tendencies, including cultural materialism, a highly deterministic neo-Marxian paradigm that considered all cultural effects to be explicable as superstructural responses to base environmental and economic conditions. The Malinowskian emphasis on economics and ecology returned to the forefront of ethnology during the 1960s.

For much of the twentieth century, the Chicago school was closely allied with British structural-functionalism and the main rival to the various Boasian offshoots. Marshall Sahlins (1972) integrated structuralism with historical particularism, environmental constraints, and the theory of economic exchange. Raymond Firth applied modern economic theories to preliterate societies. Edmund Leach synthesized an analytic model of culture in which norms of customary behavior approximate ideal concepts of social structure, while ecology governs practical economics and rational choices. For example, Leach (1954) reasoned that, in highland Burma, the organization of village life could be understood as a specific adaptation to the environmental constraints of agricultural fields and irrigation canals.

In his ethnographic writings on Indonesia and Morocco, Clifford Geertz (1973) helped set standards for particularized rigor in moving ethnology away from abstraction toward thorough local knowledge and thick description.

Beginning in the 1960s and acutely since 1980, the field has undergone arduous self-examination and critique of its own colonial past. Some ethnologists have moved away from science models toward an ethnology of reflexive and literary turns. The ever-expanding field of ethnographic inquiry has led to the proliferation and accelerating fragmentation of ethnological subdisciplines. Poststructuralism, visual anthropology, cultural studies, subaltern studies, feminist anthropology, and queer theory are some of the many ethnological subdisciplines now coexisting as integrated environmental approaches to the study of culture and society.

Human ecology and various historical so-called new ecologies, stressing the interaction of people with nature and the role anthropogenic environmental landscapes play in social organization and cultural memory, continue to gain currency at the turn of the twenty-first century. Biocultural diversity is a relatively new paradigm combining linguistic and sociocultural methods with environmental science and preservation policy studies. In its interdisciplinary relation to environmental and conservation science, ethnology plays a crucial role in understanding traditional ecosystems and involving local communities in preservation and development.

Thomas R. Miller

See Also Ethnic Folklore; Ethnography; Ethnomusicology.

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Ethnomusicology

The study of music that stresses the importance of music in and as culture. Ethnomusicology holds that music takes meaning from its cultural context. The term, which contracts ethnology with musicology, was first used to denote the

discipline in 1950 by Jaap Kunst, replacing comparative musicology (from the German *vergleichende Musikwissenschaft*), the accepted name from the late nineteenth century. Kunst argued, along with others, that comparison neither distinguished nor sufficiently delineated the research in this discipline.

At the onset, studies focused on music outside the Western art music tradition. Early researchers came from a range of disciplines and geographic areas—ethnology and anthropology in the United States, musicology and music folklore in the United Kingdom, eastern Europe and Latin America, and psychology in Germany and Austria. The disparate academic backgrounds of the researchers imparted an interdisciplinary cast that persists in ethnomusicology, albeit with changing disciplinary shades.

Music outside the Western tradition continue to hold an important position within ethnomusicology. However, the study of Western art music often has been implicit, through comparison, in the research. A few scholars explicitly have made Western music, even art music, a focus of their work. Moreover, research concerned with music in urban and complex societies has emerged as an important concern of ethnomusicologists. More generally, ethnomusicology seeks to explain and champion neglected and undervalued music and to denounce ethnocentric attitudes toward the music of other communities and cultures.

Ethnomusicology distinguishes itself from other academic disciplines through specific topics and issues of interest: origins and universals of music, musical change and conflict, the function of music within society, and relationships between language and music, to list a few historically prominent examples. Partly because of this issue-based orientation, scholars today most often define the discipline by means of a shared, if eclectic, corpus of research theory and methodology, rather than by geographic area.

Ethnomusicology can be characterized further by the persistent examination of the bounds and objectives of the discipline and by critical inquiry into its own definition. Charles Seeger argued that the most general term, musicology, would best describe this discipline that views all music from all times with equal scholarly import, rather than restricting the general term to historical musicology, a discipline largely concerned with Western art music. And George List, writing in 1979, questioned if a single definition was even possible. Other writers have argued similarly. The inquiry into definitions stems, in part, from the divergent theoretical and methodological bases of the researchers seeking common modes of discourse. Another aspect of this questioning involves efforts to gain institutional support and position for ethnomusicology vis-à-vis other more-established disciplines, especially anthropology and historical musicology.

Guido Adler, in his 1885 definition of musicology and its divisions, saw the focus of comparative musicology as the classification of the music of the world. Thus, at Adler's christening of the discipline within academe, comparison was

the discipline's central feature. Two technical developments made the comparison of oral-tradition music feasible: the invention of the phonograph by Thomas Edison in 1877 and the development of a pitch measurement system by the English physicist and phonetician Alexander J. Ellis. The phonograph facilitated the collection of music data, previously a Herculean task limited by one's musical ear and access to cooperative performers. Ellis's cents system of measurement, outlined in his 1885 article "On the Musical Scales of Various Nations," made possible a more objective comparison of pitch elements based on the division of the octave into 1,200 equal units.

Comparison as practiced by Erich M. von Hornbostel of the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv, along with his students and colleagues, was concerned largely with analysis of music elements such as scale tones, intervals, melodic movement, and rhythms. Based on analyses of recordings and musical instruments collected by colonial ethnologists, these studies produced grand, if not grandiose, classification schemes. The most renowned sought to illustrate global distribution of musical styles and artifacts. Important works of this period were Hornbostel's *Blasquinten* (blown fifths) theory relating the structure of musical scales, now discredited (see Kunst's "Around von Hornbostel's Theory of Cycle of Blown Fifths" for discussion), and Hornbostel and Curt Sachs' "Classification of Music Instruments," published in 1914, still a standard for musical instrument classification.

Comparison also infused much early ethnomusicological research in the United States. From the nineteenth century, scholars working on Native American music, most conspicuously Alice Cunningham Fletcher and Frances Densmore, created monographs on the music of individual Native American cultures. Stemming, in part, from the Austrian *Kulturhistorische Schule* (culture history school), students of Franz Boas, however, sought to organize Native American cultures into



Ethnologist Frances Densmore records the voice of Mountain Chief, a Piegan man, 1916. (Library of Congress)

geographic areas established by shared cultural traits. George Herzog, who had worked with both Hornbostel and Boas, applied the notion of culture areas in his “The Yuman Musical Style” (1928). Helen Roberts used this approach to classify Native American musical styles and instruments in her 1936 book *Musical Areas in Aboriginal North America*.

Comparison was explicit in researching the relationships between African American musical practices and those found in Africa, seen most notably in the work of Melville Herskovits and Richard Waterman. Alan Lomax’s research methodology of cantometrics, exemplified in the 1968 publication *Folk Song Style and Culture*, linked musical style with social organization and took comparison as its central feature.

The use of the term *comparative musicology* declined in the 1940s, to be replaced eventually by *ethnomusicology*. The new term gained credence with Kunst’s call to rename the discipline and was institutionalized with the establishment of the Society for Ethnomusicology in 1955. Coupled with this change in labels, there was a sharp decline in work concerned with cross-cultural comparison. In this new milieu, comparison was criticized and seen as premature until more detailed, accurate descriptions of individual cultures existed. Alan Merriam, in his 1964 book *The Anthropology of Music*, admonished much early research as considerably less than systematic in its use of comparison. In a 1966 review of Merriam’s book, John Blacking added that comparison could yield spurious results in that superficial musical elements might seem similar but be based on different cultural models of behavior and belief. Such discussions corresponded to a realization that each culture’s music deserved study in its own right, in terms appropriate to that culture and built around methods and theories that emerged from the study of that culture and its music.

Early comparative studies invariably focused on music expressions as artifacts, with little concern for the context of their existence. The shift toward the view of music as part of culture stressed methods of fieldwork, thereby making fieldwork a defining feature of ethnomusicology. Indeed, Bruno Nettl suggested in *The Study of Ethnomusicology* that a history of ethnomusicology could be written as a history of fieldwork. From the 1890s to about 1930, the collection of artifacts was accomplished with only short periods in the field. Data usually were collected by people other than the music researcher, with the exception of the fieldwork-based research by Americans on Native American music. During and beyond this period, some scholars were equally concerned with collecting and preserving entire music repertoires. Scholars feared that much of the music of the world was on the verge of extinction, and as a result, major archives of recordings were begun in Germany and the United States. The next period, roughly from 1920 to 1960, stressed research for extended periods in small communities. Studies from this period took a broader concept of fieldwork, in which the collection of music

artifacts was coupled with a concern for the complete context of any music's existence. Since the 1950s, parallel to the conviction that music expressions are important facets and indicators of a culture, there has been a further shift toward participant observation and more involvement with music. Moreover, interest in the music of complex and urban societies, where mediated forms of music such as radio broadcasts and sound records must be considered, has brought new methods of fieldwork while maintaining the significance of the participant observation method for ethnomusicology.

Since the late 1950s, ethnomusicological activity often has been characterized as oriented toward the methods and theories of either anthropology or historical musicology. Alan Merriam, the foremost champion of the anthropological orientation in ethnomusicology, suggested in *The Anthropology of Music* that the label *ethnomusicology*, combining ethnology with musicology, implies this division. Merriam drew upon methods and theories of anthropology, notably participant observation with extended periods of fieldwork and the theories of structuralism and functionalism. He argued as early as 1960 that ethnomusicology should be concerned with music in culture, later refined to music as culture, and he explicitly joined music to its cultural context in *The Anthropology of Music* through a definition of music that connected musical sound and musical behavior to a culture's beliefs and concepts of music. Mantle Hood, though sharing with Merriam a disapproval of the early comparative research and an endorsement of extended periods of fieldwork, was the strongest advocate for the musicological orientation to ethnomusicology. Hood's approach centered research around the mastery of non-Western music performance—what he called in 1960 “bi-musicality”—and he argued that training in performance, long basic to the European art music tradition, was equally applicable to the study of non-Western music. One component of this method was the development of a conservatory of music at the University of California, Los Angeles, Institute of Ethnomusicology (now the Department of Ethnomusicology), with artists representing cultures from around the world. Since the 1970s, there has been a general move away from interest in artifacts such as music compositions and genres toward an interest in processes. This change in emphasis has drawn the musicological and anthropological orientations within ethnomusicology closer together.

In Europe during the nineteenth century, research into local, oral traditions was driven by an interest in creating nationalist music fortified and sustained through materials from peasant cultures. Composers such as Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály working in Hungary, Romania, and Transylvania, and Percy Grainger in England drew upon indigenous folk music to create new art music compositions. Similarly, folk music enthusiasts, collectors, and analysts such as Cecil Sharp and Maud Karpeles researched the music of England and its immigrant offspring in the United States. Sharp's interest in melodic analysis and

classification, as discussed in *English Folk Song: Some Conclusions*, is an important legacy, an antecedent of such work as Bertrand Bronson's research on the tunes of the Child ballads. Thanks in part to Karpeles, these and other folk music scholars gained an organized forum for their research with the founding, in 1947, of the International Folk Music Council, renamed the International Council for Traditional Music in 1981.

Ethnomusicology in Latin America displays the clearest correspondence to European folk music research. Comparable to their European counterparts, Latin American music scholars began to comprehend the relevance of local traditions as nationalizing forces. This recognition coincided with nationalist movements throughout Latin American—for instance, the Andean *indigenismo* and the Brazilian *modernismo* movements. In this context, such traditions were viewed as part of the opposition to dominant elite social classes who disregarded local traditions in favor of European-derived expressive forms. This research also paralleled European folk music scholarship in its emphasis on the study of the music artifact and its devaluation of performance and contextual issues. The trend was well represented by Isabel Aretz's *Síntesis de la etnomúsica en América Latina*.

Important as all this research is, its relationship with ethnomusicology is vague. Folk music scholarship rarely has drawn upon theory that relates music and its performance to performers and social contexts, although there are important exceptions, such as Philip Bohlman's *The Study of Folk Music in the Modern World*. The influence of folk music research in ethnomusicology has been circumscribed, too. The attention given to oral tradition music in ethnomusicology stems, in part, from early folk music research. However, with a theoretical framework that stresses comparison, folk music scholarship's import was more significant during the early periods of ethnomusicology, especially in the domains of melodic analysis and tune classification. This research did not fall neatly within or completely outside definitions of ethnomusicology.

The term *ethnomusicology* today has currency remote to the academic discipline. Activities such as the performance and dissemination of non-Western and oral tradition music and the teaching of such music in primary and secondary schools are often linked with ethnomusicology. Moreover, the term often is invoked to describe the work of Western composers who make use of the musical possibilities of non-Western sources, as well as those people involved with non-Western music as part of a global economic marketplace. Somewhat alarmed by these uses of the term, Alan Merriam in 1975 made the distinction between ethnomusicologists and others whose activities draw upon ethnomusicology.

In 1956, Willard Rhodes, arguing the importance of ethnomusicological scholarship for both the social sciences and humanities, warned against narrowing the discipline's scope and goals. His caveat evidently has been taken to heart, given

the wide range of research and activities that now fall under the rubric ethnomusicology.

Leslie C. Gay Jr.

See Also Ballad; Broadside Ballad; Cantometrics; Folksong, Lyric; Folksong, Narrative; Hymn, Folk; Musical Instrument, Folk.

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Ethnopoetics

The study of aesthetic structures within oral performances. An outgrowth of the performance school, on the one hand, and structural linguistics, on the other, ethnopoetics seeks to discover and present the distinctive features of oral performances. Its aim is both descriptive and analytical. Although ethnopoetics was developed initially through the analysis of Native American narrative, it has been applied to a variety of other oral traditions and has influenced the ways folklorists present and interpret transcribed narrative in general. It offers valuable insights into such folkloristic issues as orality, literacy, translation, cultural change, and the relation of language and worldview (the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis).

The study of ethnopoetics draws largely on the insights of two researchers, Dennis Tedlock and Dell Hymes, who have shaped the issues of the field. For Tedlock, oral performance differs from prose narrative in its reliance on the expressive capacities of the human voice. Through pauses and phonological cues (e.g., stress shift, intonation, amplitude, tone), the performer adds stylistic dimensions that become meaningful and entertaining to the native audience. Folklorists must find ways to express such oral texture in print through innovative use of visual signs. Even when presenting texts in translated form, folklorists can thus convey aesthetic features.

Proceeding from the realization that narratives in a number of Native American languages resemble poetry more than prose, Hymes and other researchers analyze texts to discover the formal means by which rhetorical structure and aesthetics find expression in oral narrative. Attention to details such as grammatical structures, parallelism, and repetition can help the researcher perceive not only poetic lines within the text but also grouping of lines into larger units, culminating in an overall aesthetic architecture of the performance itself. Often, the pattern number(s) of the culture in question plays a key role in determining the structure of a narrative.

Whereas folklorists working within Tedlock's framework stress the universal aspects of oral performance—its reliance on the voice—folklorists following Hymes's approach focus on the culture- and language-specific means by which aesthetic form is achieved. Assumptions of universality must be first tested cross-culturally. Both traditions represent important developments in folkloristics today.

Thomas A. DuBois

See Also Aesthetics; Ethnoaesthetics; Performance; Text.

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Etiological Narrative

An explanation of how things came to be the way they are or were at a given time or under certain conditions. The adjective *etiology* is derived from a late Latin and Greek composite word: *aetiologia*, meaning “cause description” (*atia*, cause + *logia*, description); it is used in a number of fields to signify the science of causes or origins (e.g., in medicine to refer to the origins of a specific disease).

In folklore, the term *etiology* has been applied frequently in conjunction with other folkloristic concepts to designate the explanatory function of an item, commonly in narrative form. A story may belong to any of a number of genres, depending on the story’s form, style, and contents, as well as on the narrator’s intent for telling it (or the tale’s function). Generally speaking, a traditional account of how a thing originated would be perceived as factual and taken seriously by narrator and listeners. Thus, etiological narratives are typically classified as falling within one of two main categories: belief (religious-sacred, mythological) and historical (legend, ethnic history, historical anecdotes). These two categories often overlap; such narratives also appear in instructional didactic roles (e.g., as moralistic fables or religious exempla). Laurits Bødker cites such Germanic terms as *Aetio fable*, *Ätiologische sage*, *Ätiologische märchen*, and *Ätiologische tierfabel*.

An etiological belief narrative may be labeled a myth or sacred story (e.g., biblical, Koranic)—myth being a belief whose validity is not accepted by the person applying the term. Consequently, Stith Thompson classifies the bulk of etiological themes as “Mythological”; Hasan El-Shamy expands the scope to “Mythological [and related belief] motifs.”

Examples of such motifs include the following: A20, “Origin of the creator”; A1 10, “Origin of the gods”; A5 10, “Origin of the culture-hero (demigod)”; A980, “Origin of particular places”; A 1335, “Origin of death”; A1370, “Origin of mental and moral characteristics”; A1610, “Origin of various tribes”; and A2221, “Animal characteristics reward for pious act.” Examples of legendary (historically possible) motifs are: A1464.1.1, “First poetry composed in imitation of tone of hammer on anvil,” and Z21.1. “Origin of chess.” Meanwhile, the formulaic theme to which such a tale belongs has been recently designated as new Motif Z19.3§, “Etiological tales: ‘that-is-why’-tales” (the sign § designates additions to Thompson’s motifs).

A number of etiological tales appear cross-culturally as tale types. Among these are a few *animal tales*, such as “Why Dogs Look One Another under the Tail” (AT 200A) and “Why Dog Chases Hare” (AT 200C*). Infrequently, an etiological tale may be an *ordinary folktale* (compare with *Märchen*), such as “Why the Sea Is Salt: Magic Salt Mill” (AT 565); it may also appear as a *formula tale*, as in the case of “Origin of Chess” (AT 2009). The majority, however, are cited under the category of *religious tales* (AT 750–849), such as “Origin of

Physical Defects among Mankind” (AT 758A), “Mushroom from Peter’s Spit-tle” (AT 774L), and “Why Big Trees Have Small Fruit” (AT 774P).

Hasan El-Shamy

See Also Belief Tale; Folktale; Legend; Myth.

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Euhemerism

The practice of explaining folk narratives as oral records of actual, historical events. By extension, the term might be applied to similar explanations of other kinds of folk traditions, such as nursery rhymes. The term is taken from the name of a Greek philosopher of the third century BCE, Euhemerus, who argued that the gods had once been mortal heroes and royalty who had been deified. Hence, myths were accounts of the historical deeds of the gods. Euhemerists would argue that fantastic elements in folk narratives that cannot be taken literally are later accretions around a core of historical truth. Folklorists and historians most commonly conceive the term *euhemerism* as having negative connotations, as being applicable not to all attempts to uncover historical bases for folk traditions but only to such attempts that are naive and uncritical, at least by modern standards.

There has been a continuous tradition of euhemeristic interpretation, particularly in regard to myths, since ancient times. Early Christian writers found the concept appealing, for it gave them an intellectual tool with which to attack the sacredness of pagan narratives, reducing them to being considered distorted historical accounts involving mere mortals. However, in the Middle Ages, when it was no longer necessary to refute paganism, euhemeristic approaches allowed scholars writing universal history to use ancient myths as historical sources.

Medieval euhemerists eventually turned ancient gods and legendary heroes into human benefactors who had introduced knowledge and arts or who had been responsible for founding modern nations. These ideas continued into the Renaissance, with gods sometimes becoming historical progenitors of rising royal houses. As the age of rational inquiry evolved in the late seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries,

some thinkers considering the nature of myth developed euhemeristic approaches. Antoine Banier (1675–1741), for example, argued that the ancient myths would not have been accorded respect had they not had historical substance.

More recently, euhemeristic approaches have had particular appeal for writers seeking to establish unorthodox theories. These authors have seen oral traditions as conveying information not found in more conventional sources. In the late nineteenth century, Ignatius Donnelly discussed oral traditions about great floods from numerous cultures to prove the existence of the lost continent of Atlantis; he also offered mythic and legendary accounts from many parts of the world to establish that in prehistoric times, a great comet had hit or come close to earth, causing calamities that were remembered in these oral traditions. In the 1960s, Erich von Daniken used myths and legends, among other materials, to argue that astronauts from outer space had visited the earth in ancient times.

In recent years, folklorists and others have carefully and critically examined the historical bases for folk traditions and the relationship between folklore and history. Richard Dorson stressed the need to understand American folklore in the context of American cultural history. Jan Vansina developed rigorous methods for examining African historical traditions, and Dorothy Vitaliano looked at ancient myths and legends in the light of modern geological knowledge.

Frank de Caro

See Also Historical Analysis.

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Evolutionary Theory

That theory that proposed that human culture evolved through stages over time according to a uniform and logical process. This theory was a mainstay of folklore and anthropological studies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially in Great Britain. It related to folklore in that folk traditions were

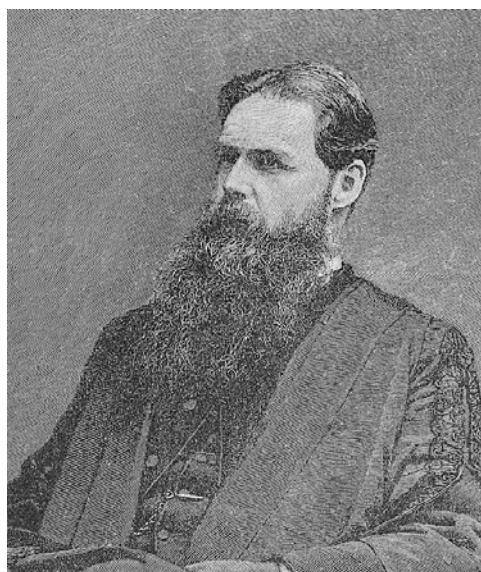
seen as “survivals” from earlier times that could help in understanding earlier culture and the development of culture.

As the science of anthropology developed in the mid-nineteenth century, it adopted an evolutionary paradigm. Although Charles Darwin (1809–1882) did not originate thinking about evolution, his ideas in natural history were influential. Especially with his second landmark book, *The Descent of Man* (1871), Darwin—as well Thomas Henry Huxley (1825–1895), who played a key role in making known and defending Darwin—put human beings into the context of biological processes by establishing that humans did not remain apart from physical evolution. Knowledge of fossils and prehistory also was expanding in this period, and physical anthropology was developing as a field of study. The knowledge gained in these areas of study provided a new scientific basis for indicating not only the antiquity of the human race but also a continuous process of human advancement. As the science of anthropology took shape, its proponents logically looked to evolution (though evolution remained a controversial idea in society at large) as a theory that could unify their endeavors, for those who shaped the science of anthropology sought to understand the origin and historical development of humanity and of such social institutions as law, religion, and morality.

Anthropologists came to see human societies as evolving through stages, generally referred to as savagery, barbarism, and, finally, civilization. The American Lewis Henry Morgan (1818–1881) argued, for example, in *Ancient Society* (1877), that humans were a unitary group and followed certain logical steps in their advancement. He further divided the first two stages of development into lower, middle, and upper and associated particular developments with each stage (such as the use of pottery with the stage of lower barbarism).

Folklore became an aspect of evolutionary theory primarily through the writings of Sir Edward Burnett Tylor (1832–1917), commonly regarded as the principal founder of cultural anthropology, and his disciples, notably Andrew Lang (1844–1912). Tylor sought to show that culture evolved and to establish a comparative method for examining that process of development. In part, he was attempting to refute the positions of certain religiously oriented thinkers who argued that some humans had, in fact, devolved from a higher state to a lower one. This conception ultimately went back to the biblical story of a fall from grace but was primarily the result of an upsurge in the European Christian missionary activity that followed upon the expansion of colonial empires. For missionary work, it became useful to believe not only that the “savages” who were being evangelized had degenerated but also that, as a result, they were incapable of spiritual progress without the help of the “superior” white race. Tylor relentlessly amassed evidence to prove the consistent evolution of culture and to bolster the optimism of those who believed in the inevitability of human progress.

British anthropologist Sir Edward Burnett Tylor (1832–1917). (Time Life Pictures/Getty Images)



Tylor thought that archaeology could fill in some of the gaps in the history of early humanity but that it could provide knowledge only about material culture, not about the mental and spiritual sides of human development. To fill in that particular gap, “survivals” were to be examined, compared, and analyzed. Like Morgan, he believed that nothing happens but in logical sequence. In terms of material culture, all evidence pointed to evolution. None of his contemporaries, he reasoned, would use an arrow as the ultimate weapon, and one could readily see how the bow was replaced by the gun and how simple tools were replaced by more complex ones. The same was true of nonmaterial aspects of culture, he asserted. Tylor began by asking how it was that a whole range of customs, beliefs, and processes that did not seem sensible for present-day culture nonetheless existed. The answer, he said, was because these were “survivals” from earlier cultural stages (just as antique bows and arrows were left over from earlier days). These beliefs and customs made perfect sense in their own historical context, and though society in effect evolved around them as a result of “sound judgment and practical reason,” the beliefs and customs remained (because of some “efficient cause,” such as psychological dependence) and could guide us in understanding that earlier context. According to Tylor, survivals were “processes, customs, opinions . . . which have been carried on by force of habit into a new state of society different from that in which they had their original home, and they thus remain as proofs of an older condition of culture out of which a newer has evolved” (from his 1871 work, *Primitive Culture*). Tylor probably took a clue from the work of earlier scholars and antiquarians who had established that folk traditions were “remains” or “relics” of earlier times and hence

historical documents. Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, for example, had argued that the folktales in their famous collection were among the last surviving pieces of an older Germanic culture. But Tylor established a more systematic and more informed and sophisticated conception within the grand framework of evolution.

Though Tylor looked at a wide range of cultural facts (particularly in *Primitive Culture*), many of the aspects of culture he examined were folkloric elements, for these often involved actions or ideas that seemed not to be fully rational in terms of the perspective of the educated elite of the late nineteenth century and that also could be presumed archaic. In looking at culture, Tylor developed a comparative method that involved fixing upon a particular presumed survival and then examining whatever information was available on manifestations of culture that appeared to be similar and related. Information might be drawn from older written materials, travel literature, the accounts of human behavior (which were multiplying as the result of observations made in colonial contexts), or other sources. The information might be about the mores of historical peoples, newly encountered, contemporary “primitives” (who had not yet evolved as fully as had civilized peoples), or European peasants (who, of course, were coming to be considered the prime repositories of folklore). Once the information had been amassed and compared, conclusions could be drawn as to what was revealed about earlier culture, how earlier humans thought and acted, and how certain aspects of culture had developed.

Tylor’s best-known analysis, which explained a custom very widespread even today, aptly illustrates his method—his explanation of why we say “God bless you” (or something similar) when someone near us sneezes. Looking to a number of cultural contexts, he noted various similar customs. A member of the Zulu (who believe themselves surrounded by both good and evil spirits) said, when he sneezed, “I am now blessed; the ancestral spirit is with me,” and asked for favors. He believed that a good spirit had entered his body. At one time in Guinea, when someone important sneezed, others would fall to their knees, kiss the earth, clap hands, and wish each other prosperity. Pacific islanders considered a sneeze a bad omen. Among the Amakosa, a sneeze was an occasion to call upon divine ancestor spirits. The Zulu also saw in repeated yawning a sign of approaching spirit possession. Persians ascribed yawning to demoniac possession, and modern Muslims, Tylor added, avoided yawning because the devil could leap into one’s mouth when it was opened so wide. A Jewish proverb said, “Open not thy mouth to Satan,” Celtic sneezers might be carried off by fairies, and members of a certain religious sect would spit and blow their noses to expel evil spirits that they might have breathed in. And the Zulu saw a sick person’s sneeze as a sign of impending recovery. This compilation of information on oral lore, customs, and beliefs indicated to Tylor that at an earlier stage of culture, men and women believed that spirits could enter and leave the human body through the facial orifices. Though we have evolved beyond such a belief, its vestiges survive,

enabling us to understand something of its former existence and nature. Tylor thought that although culture evolved logically along certain lines in a progressive direction, not all individual cultures evolved at the same pace. Thus, even at the end of the nineteenth century, societies could be found where the older ideas persisted, not merely as isolated customs (as with European peasants) but also as more integrally related to a context. Hence, information about the “primitive” groups of the world was believed to be particularly valuable in understanding human development.

Tylor’s ideas were used by the ethnologist John Lubbock (Lord Avebury, 1834–1913) and popularized by the writer James Anson Farrer (1849–1925), and they greatly influenced a generation of folklorists. Andrew Lang in particular sought to develop the study of folklore along the lines of Tylor’s theories and methodology, and other folklorists of his day had their work shaped by Lang’s interpretations of Tylor. Tylor had never suggested that folklore was necessarily always a survival or that all survivals fell into the realm of folklore, but Lang was to declare that folklore was the science of survivals and to argue that folkloric survivals were the virtual equivalents of geological fossils and archaeological artifacts. In *Custom and Myth* (1893), he insisted that the very motive for folkloric study was to look for an “irrational and anomalous custom” and to compare it to a context “where a similar practice is found . . . in harmony with the manners and ideas of the people among whom it prevails.” If, for example, we could not understand why the ancient Greeks danced with serpents in their hands, we could look to Native Americans who still did so. We could understand why the Native Americans practiced the custom through ethnological investigation and thus “conjecture that similar motives once existed among the ancestors of the Greeks.” In folklore, according to Lang, we would find “the remains of ideas as old as the stone elf-shots, older than the celt or bronze.” And folklore was to be studied primarily because it could help us to understand the early state of mind from which we evolved.

Among other folklorists, Edwin Sidney Hartland (1848–1927) looked for traces of ancient religious rituals in later folk narratives, and Edward Clodd (1840–1930) examined the folktale best known by its German name—“Rumpelstiltskin”—to understand ancient name magic. The powerful influence of Tylor and Lang’s evolutionary perspective is perhaps best seen in how matter-of-factly it was incorporated into Charlotte Burne’s *Handbook of Folklore* (1914), intended as a basic introduction to the subject. The introduction emphasized that, through folklore, “the study of rudimentary economic and political forms should enable us to trace the *lines of development* of the several systems of civilized nations from their source” (emphasis added).

The evolutionary perspective was not without its critics, even among those who adhered to its basic tenets. Sir George Laurence Gomme (1853–1916)

argued, in a number of publications, that his colleagues were not sufficiently tied to specific historical or geographic contexts, implying that to be concerned only with cultural evolution in the broadest terms was to deal with the development of human institutions too vaguely.

As the twentieth century moved ahead, the evolutionary perspective in folklore studies declined in interest and importance. Folklorists and anthropologists increasingly realized that the equivalences that had been drawn between customs and beliefs in widely diverse cultures had often been based on tenuous similarities. Careful fieldwork frequently showed that seemingly similar cultural practices had very different functions and meanings for different groups and thus really could not be compared to yield evolutionary explanations. Further, written sources that described various cultures had often been accepted uncritically and in fact presented very incomplete or misunderstood data. In general, particularly because of the trend toward fieldwork (which gave individual researchers profound insights into contemporary, whole societies), there was a move away from historical and genetic explanations and toward functional and symbolic ones.

Frank de Caro

See Also Anthropological Approach; Comparative Mythology; Myth-Ritual Theory.

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Exorcism

The practice of dislodging an evil spirit from a person, often by prayers or charms. Sickness may be seen as the entrance of a malevolent spirit into the afflicted person, and this spirit may be removed to the exorcist (via transference), who temporarily suffers the pain of the patient. Commonly, the process begins

with some type of divination, which identifies the spirit and determines propitious signs for a cure. Both exorcist and patient typically put themselves into a hypnotic state by means of drumming, dancing, and various other forms of either sensory stimulus or sensory deprivation.

The exorcist expels the spirit not through his or her own efforts but through an appeal to a higher authority. He or she typically talks to the demon rather than the patient and tries to induce it, by threats or commands and in the name of the friendly deity or spirit, to leave the possessed person. The demon (or demons) may balk or even strike a deal, demanding something in return for leaving the victim, and it is not uncommon for the exorcist to profit from such transactions. Cures by exorcism may be quick and efficient, although in the Christian church, cures by a single application of exorcism appear to have been rare; more often, exorcisms have lasted days, weeks, months, and even years. If the first attempt at exorcism is unsuccessful, the methods used may become more extreme. Sometimes, patient and healer negotiate the cure. Carmen Blacker describes a Japanese healer telling a patient that she will have to undergo the “cold water austerity” night and morning for twenty-one days; then, when the patient rejects this solution, the healer proposes the recitation of the Heart Sutra every night at half past midnight.

Often, the exorcism ceremony involves a laying on of hands. In the Japanese Mahikari cult, the hands are held up, palms out, and thought to exert a curing force on the subject. Here, as in many other belief systems, if the subject becomes physically sick and vomits, a purification is believed to be taking place.

Historically, outside observers have often viewed curing rituals by exorcism as a kind of flimflam intended to bedazzle gullible subjects and spectators. Such a view supposes the curer to exist in another belief system than the audience. As Seth and Ruth Leacock have pointed out in their study of an Afro-Brazilian cult, “Far from being a ceremony designed to mystify the uninitiated, a curing ritual is a performance before a knowledgeable and critical audience.” Moreover, some contemporary scholars have recognized that, just as modern medicine has advantages over traditional medicine, the converse is also true. Winston Davis has observed that “although [modern medicine] can diagnose terminal illnesses with terrifying accuracy, it may offer no hope at all for their cure.” Traditional curing, involving the exorcism of spirits, virtually always offers the possibility of a cure; it is steadfastly optimistic. And it is difficult to deny the evidence from modern scholars, such as William Sargant, that a good deal of real curing, in particular of psychological trauma, does take place in curing ceremonies.

Paul Barber

See Also Assault, Supernatural; Medicine, Folk; Possession; Shamanism.

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Fabulate

A migratory legend that does not reflect personal experience but instead is told principally for entertainment. Coined in 1934 by C. W. von Sydow, the term *fabulate* was intended as a contrast to *memorate*, a narrative reflecting an individual's contact with the supernatural. Fabulates, Sydow said, may have some elements based in experience, "yet they do not immediately come from these, but from a mental image that has originated from elements of this type in which they, so-to-say, crystallized." To this extent, he concluded, the events narrated in the fabulate "could not have actually happened in the form that they take in the telling; they were shaped much more by the creative art of the folk" (von Sydow 1978).

Sydow used the term *fabulate* to refer to a variety of narratives, many of which would be classified as legends in the Anglo-American system. But his sense of the term extended beyond the belief legend to jocular narratives, such as the "person fabulates" told about Germanic trickster Till Eulenspiegel—these would more likely be termed *Schwanks* or jocular tales today. Sydow's vague sense of the concept's defining trait, Juha Pentikäinen has noted, led succeeding folklorists to use the term in confusingly diverse senses. It has been used as everything from a global term for *all* prose narration to a more judgmental label for a story that "clearly contains invented, empirically unbelievable elements" (von Sydow 1978).

This emphasis on the notion that fabulates were objectively untrue has raised opposition. Such a claim assumes that truth-falsehood claims, particularly about supernatural events, can be resolved objectively by folklorists. So the term *fabulate* (like the related term *urban legend*) may imply the collector's belief that the teller is ignorant or irrational.

But Sydow's essential distinction between stories as stories and stories as evidence for belief has some basis. Gillian Bennett has contrasted urban legends told with conviction and those told more for their value as narratives, and she found a large number of rhetorical differences. For her, legends told "for laughs" may be morphologically identical to folktales, and so there is value to identifying them and considering them separately from narratives told "for true." However, the term *fabulate* then becomes a descriptive term appropriate only to a given performed text; given changes in context, the same informant may relate the same events "for laughs" or "for true." Judgments about the empirical truth behind the narrative simply become irrelevant.

Pentikäinen, like most European scholars, restricts the term *fabulate* to narratives that subordinate matters of belief to the artistic form of the performance itself. Hence, the fabulate is essentially a narrative developed and standardized by the narrator's desire to tell an entertaining story. Characters included may take roles or perform actions that are more in line with characters in *Märchen* than in belief legends. Consequently, the fabulate is a better guide to a culture's storytelling aesthetic than to living folk belief.

Bill Ellis

See Also Legend.

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Faerie and Fairy Lore

Faerie, or fairyland, is the realm thought to be populated by fairies. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines *fairies* as “supernatural beings . . . popularly supposed to have magical powers, and to meddle for good or evil in the affairs of men.” Whatever their names, all share certain traits: generally invisible, they have the



A midsummer fairy, painted by Kate Greenaway. (*Kate Greenaway Pictures from Originals Presented by her to John Ruskin and Other Personal Friends*, 1921)

power of “glamour,” the ability to make themselves visible or to enchant or hypnotize; they are ordinarily smaller than mortals—and they are always somehow “other” than human. They may be helpful and benign, destructive and malevolent, or simply capricious and mischievous.

The origin of fairies is much debated. Traditional Christian religious and popular views of fairies connected them to the fallen angels, deluded by Satan, who did not have the strength to choose God or the devil. Thus, they were ejected from heaven yet not condemned to hell. Some fell into the sea, becoming the mer-creatures of the waters; some dropped into the caverns of the earth and became goblins, kobolds, gnomes, or dwarfs; some fell into woods and forests becoming elves, pixies, and the like. Another similar idea was that they were the children of Adam and Eve, whose existence the couple denied when inquired about by God. Still others suggested that they were the pre-Adamite inhabitants of earth. In short, these commentators saw them as a morally indeterminate “second race” inhabiting the world alongside humans.

Another common belief in Europe was that fairies were a special category of the dead. In *British Fairy Origins* (1946), Lewis Spence argued for their connection to a cult of the dead on the basis of their sizes, similar dwelling places, and the frequently identical tales and rituals associated with both groups. Some thought them the spirits of the ancient druids or of the pagans who had died before the possibility of salvation through Christ. A more contemporary explanation, offered by modern occultists, is that they are the souls of the recent dead awaiting reincarnation or transportation to the astral plane.

Yet another theory holds that fairies are diluted versions of the ancient deities of a given country or of nature spirits from the early stages of civilization. Gods and heroes—reduced in stature and importance as new beliefs supersede old ones—become the elfin peoples. Euhemerists (believers in an historical basis for myth and folklore) suggest that fairies are derived from folk memories of earlier or aboriginal inhabitants of a country, long after its conquest by its present inhabitants.

Modern spiritualists, theosophists, and Rosicrucians (members of a secret order who seek esoteric knowledge) have added to origin theories by suggesting that fairies are the elementals (spirits of the four elements) of Paracelsus (ca. 1500), and later alchemists and magicians and the agents present in psychical phenomena. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, whose book *The Coming of the Fairies* (1921) placed photographs of elfin creatures in the glare of publicity, thought them life-forms existing on another branch of the tree of evolution—little nature spirits whose special function was to tend plants and flowers.

No single explanation of their genesis covers all varieties, for fairies range from the beautiful, godlike Tuatha De Danann of the Irish to the tailed, grotesque little creatures known in southern Africa as tokoloshes. However, there is some consensus about their habitats, behaviors, and characteristics. Fairylands may be located

within prehistoric burial places, as with the Irish *sidhe* (“people of the mounds”), within mountains, as with the “Little People” of Mount Kilimanjaro, within caves, forests, or even underwater. Wherever fairyland, or faerie, is located, it is a world without change, decay, illness, or aging, and a realm without time—or rather, with a sense of time different from the human, as one fairy day may be 100 mortal years.

Elfin behavior is best described as capricious and amoral. Fairies love and reward cleanliness and order, yet have no qualms about stealing from mortals; they are known to take the “goodness” or essence out of human food. Yet they are generous and reward mortals who aid them. Passionate about protecting their privacy, they severely punish those who spy on them or visit them uninvited, yet they are capable of great hospitality. As befits creatures linked to fertility, they are often wanton and highly sexual in nature; they take mortal lovers at whim and can literally destroy them with amorous actions. They must always be treated with caution and, above all, with politeness and respect. At their worst, they are capable of considerable evil; they can paralyze with elf-shot or fairy-stroke, cause madness, and kill humans. Many of their actions, however, fall between these categories. They love mischief and are fond of pranks.

Fairy infertility may explain their kidnapping of human infants, substitution of their own imperfect offspring, and frequent abduction of women to serve as midwives, nurses, or breeders. Tales of changed children and of fairy changelings abound. Other frequently told stories deal with the love between mortals and fairies. These often follow patterns similar to tales of animal brides and animal grooms. There are numerous accounts of mortals visiting the fairy realm and a host of homier legends of fairies asking for and gaining human aid.

However, fairy tales (*Märchen*) and tales about fairies (often legends or memorates) are not the same thing. Nursery tales often lack fairies, and accounts of encounters with them are often devoid of the elements of *Märchen*. Moreover, the fairies in Geoffrey Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* and William Shakespeare’s plays are amalgams of folklore and literary conventions. The literary fairy tale or *conte de fées* of French seventeenth-century society compounds the mixture both by giving the “fairy tale” its name and by adding to the ranks of supernatural creatures. The authored French stories of the seventeenth century are the sources of the benevolent fairy godmother, and of aristocratic, powerful female supernatural creatures whose magic can make or break the fortunes—especially the loves—of mortals. Utilized and rendered mystical in the literary fairy tales of the German Romantics, fairy creatures passed into the mainstream culture of Europe.

Even in the twenty-first century, fairy lore is not yet dead. The resemblance of the small grey creatures from UFOs to the fairies has given the transformed elfin races a new and only slightly different life.

Carole G. Silver

See Also Celtic Folklore and Mythology.

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Fairy Tale Heroes

The “fairy tale” is almost entirely an invention of Western literature. Stories involving heroes and heroines, transformations, supernatural beings, and happy endings exist—and presumably have existed—in most of the world’s many cultures. But it was in the seventeenth century that the story form we now recognize as the fairy tale began to be given its familiar shape, mainly, though not exclusively, by the French writers Charles Perrault (1628–1703) and Comtesse d’Aulnoy (1650 or 1651–1705). Perrault published his collection of fairy tales as *Histoires du temps passé: Avec des Moralitez* (1697; first translated into English in 1729). The original edition also contained the additional subtitle *Contes de mère l’oie*, giving rise to the widespread marketing of such collections as “Tales of Mother Goose,” or variations thereof. Comtesse d’Aulnoy, as Madam Aulnoy, published *Contes de fées* (1697) and *Les Contes nouveaux* (1698). These authors, together with a number of less well-known writers, deliberately set out to create stories and story sequences that would entertain and instruct a growing educated and literate middle class in France, Germany, and elsewhere in Europe.

The narratives these early writers used as the basis for their confabulations and confections were those they had heard from storytellers in childhood and adulthood. Some of these narratives can be traced back to the Italian Giovanni Boccaccio’s (1313–1375) reworking of traditional and literary tales in his *Il Decamerone* (Ten Days’ Work, 1348–1353, first translated into English as *The Decameron* in 1620), and sometimes even farther back to the Greek fables of Aesop (ca. 620–560 BCE) and his many subsequent imitators and expanders. However, the forms the stories took in these earlier works, and the purposes they served, were often transformed by the seventeenth-century inventors of the fairy tale. In these early forms of the genre, we can find the introduction of fairy godmothers and motifs like the glass slipper as a device of recognition. We can also find the beginnings of the happy ending and of everyone—all the good ones, at least—living ever after. By the time the brothers Grimm came to assemble their enormously influential collection of folktales in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the genre—its conventions and its place in civilized society—was already established.

So powerfully was the fairy tale established in the mentality of the Grimms’ time and place that they were unable to publish the stories they collected (from a narrow range of informants) in the form in which they received them. As a number



Roundabout The Witch, a painting by artist Ana Juan, inspired by the Grimm Brothers fairy tale *Hansel and Gretel*. (Getty Images)

of scholars have revealed, the Grimms not only tidied up their collected tales for publication, but Wilhelm, especially, also progressively rewrote them for subsequent editions of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (Children's and Household Tales, 2 vols., 1812–1815; first translated into English in 1884). This complex work is now widely referred to in English simply as *Grimms' Fairy Tales* and is considered the touchstone of the fairy tale genre. However, in editing the tales for publication, the Grimms usually excised or ameliorated suggestions of cannibalism, sexuality, and unmotivated evil, all well and truly part of the folkloric versions of these stories. Heroes who appeared in the original stories unnamed were given affectionate names, like Hansel and Gretel. Motives were created to account for the often cruel and evil actions of characters, especially parents. The infamous “wicked stepmother” was introduced as a substitute for the natural mother as the frequent villain of stories. Wicked stepmothers existed in tradition, but the Grimms, apparently unable or unwilling to deal with the notion that a “natural”

mother might be capable of abandonment and infanticide (or possibly assuming that their audience would be repelled by such things), used the device of the wicked stepmother to ameliorate or avoid the implications of the tales as collected. Generally, the Grimms also increased the length of the stories from their original tellings. By the time the 1857 edition of *Hausmärchen* appeared, most of the stories were at least twice the length of their originals, with Wilhelm's tinkering progressively shaping the narratives into more fairy tale-like form.

The immense success and influence of the Grimms' work in this field reinforced and confirmed the existing literary form of the fairy tale. Other people, seeing the great commercial success such creations enjoyed, were not slow to follow in the tracks of the Grimms. The last half of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth were filled with "fairy tale" collections and anthologies of both serious scholars like Andrew Lang (1844–1912—author of the famous "colored" fairy book series) and Joseph Jacobs (1854–1916—author/compiler of numerous fairy tale anthologies), and the less-specialized and generally less-knowledgeable work of children's writers and other popularizers. So prevalent and powerful was the European notion of the fairy tale that it was inflicted on folktales collected from other cultures, thus the publication of books with titles such as "Fairy Tales of Japan" and "Fairy Tales of Burma."

The very category fairy tale is itself a limiting concept that inaccurately standardizes elements of folk tradition that circulate in many forms and circumstances. For example, the story most readers will know as "Cinderella" is but one of a great number of existing and possible variations on the same theme. The same can be said of most other fairy tales. Indeed, different fairy tales are often recovered from folk—as opposed to literary or media—tradition melded together into one story, as in the Bolognese Italian *Girricoccola*, which is a mixture of "Cinderella" and "Snow White," combined with elements of other folktales.

Jack Zipes and others have shown that the fairy tale was a natural form for the film industry to adopt. The unique capability of film to blend fantasy and apparent actuality made fairy stories an early recruit to the ever-increasing demands of the film business. Especially influential here were animated films, especially those of Disney and imitators. Combined with the incessant flow of children's books that present fairy tales "for young readers," these relatively modern extensions have kept the fairy tale continually before the public. The genre is now an unremarkable element of everyday life and consciousness.

This knowledge of the origins and development of the fairy tale is especially important for an understanding of folk heroes. In the modern world, most of us are shaped by information we receive from media sources rather than from oral sources. The forms of story that played such an important part in earlier periods of history and that in many cultures are still important today no longer form part of the education or everyday knowledge of those born and bred in Western

Goldilocks

In its most widely known version, the tale of the little girl who blunders into the house of the three bears, eating their porridge, sitting in their chairs, and sleeping in their beds, is one of the most unsatisfying of all heroine stories, lacking both motivation and a proper resolution. This has not worried generations of parents, children, and publishers of children's literature or makers of pantomimes in the slightest. Goldilocks is one of the best-loved nursery stories of the modern era, with the heroine's preference for the food or furniture of the baby bear ensuring its popularity with young children.

The origin of what we now know as "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" is usually traced to a Scots story in which three bears are disturbed by a female fox, or vixen, who is then eaten by the bears, but the basic elements of "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" are drawn from the common pool of European folktale. The apparently abandoned house in the woods, the invasion of its privacy, and the insistent three-fold structure of the story are widespread motifs and devices of folktale and are adapted to good effect for this much-told tale.

In its modern form, the story of Goldilocks and the three bears can be traced to the early nineteenth century and a book by the English poet Robert Southey (*The Doctor*, 1837). The heroine—a small woman, not a girl called Goldilocks—escapes the wrath of the bears by jumping out the window. Southey's story offers no further information about what might have happened to her. Southey may have based his version on an earlier tradition, known to have been in existence in 1831 (and almost



Goldilocks is discovered by the three bears, illustrated by Maginel Wright Enright. (Tweed, Anna, ed. *Fairy Tales Everyone Should Know*, 1920)

certainly before that), in which an elderly woman takes the Goldilocks role. Joseph Cundall made further changes to the tale between 1849 and 1904, when in his various retellings of the tale, he first made the heroine a small girl and then successively named and renamed her Silver-Hair, Silver-Locks, Golden-Hair, and finally Goldilocks. These changes were complemented by the *Mother Goose's Fairy Tales* anthology of 1878, which changed the Great Huge Bear, Middle Bear, and Little Small Wee Bear into Father Bear, Mother Bear, and Baby Bear. The cumulative effect of these changes was to render what was originally a far more fearsome oral tale into a reasonably comfortable family story that, with its suspense and unrealized hint of menace, made it ideally suited for the nursery, where it remains stubbornly to this day.

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industrial societies. We have new forms of storytelling to express our underlying fears and to help us walk in the world. These forms are predominantly involved with the mass media. The Hollywood happy ending, like that of the fairy tale, is a cliché that many of us welcome and seek again and again at the movies. Such stories—their tellings and their endings—are so widespread and popular that they must be seen as an important element of our lives and of modern culture.

As we grow up, we take our heroes and heroines from their representations in the mass media rather than from the stories we are told as children. And even those stories usually come to us from children's books rather than from the folk memories of parents or grandparents. We are used to heroes being the creation of the media, a process that—along with the creation of villains—is integral to the operation of modern media. Many of the historical heroes appearing in these pages have been, to a greater or lesser extent, creations of the popular media of their times. Even as far back as seventeenth-century Europe and second-century CE China, the influence of writing, printing, and publishing has played a significant role in the creation and proliferation of “goodies and baddies,” heroes and heroines.

The heroes of fairy tales, notably of the variety promulgated by the brothers Grimm and their successors, are an oddly bloodless lot. Indeed, Maria Tatar has pointed out that the predominant characteristic of the fairy tale hero is his humility and naiveté, even stupidity. The heroines of these fictions are also shown by Tatar and other commentators to be relatively passive. Things tend to be done *to* them, rather than *by* them. They are frequently victims, at least to begin with. Wicked stepmothers cast them out; they are enchanted; dwarves help them; and, finally, a prince rescues them and marries them. There is nothing clearly heroic in these events and about those who take part in them. It is as though all the characters are being moved through a predetermined script and toward an agreed resolution and closure by some unseen force. It is this secure and knowable aspect of fairy tales, at least the most often retold of them, that perhaps accounts for a good deal of their perennial popularity and wide diffusion.

By contrast to the other vast world of folk narrative outside the genre of the fairy tale, in these stories heroines outnumber heroes. Many fairy tale heroes do not even have a proper name and generally play out their pre-plotted roles automatically and often without much grasp of what is going on or what is at stake. Nevertheless, either despite or because of their stupidity, and often with the more than magnanimous assistance of bands of helpers, they win through in the end, getting the girl, the gold, and the kingdom. But although the heroine, through the agency of the hero, shares in this good fortune, she rarely does anything heroic. She is generally the object of actions carried out by others, good or bad, and is frequently humiliated in the course of the story, Cinderella being one example of many. Those seeking heroines with greater volition will not often be satisfied by the fairy tale but will seek out the more full-blooded traditions of the folktale.

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See Also Cinderella; Grimm Brothers; Hero/Heroine, Folk; Jack and the Beanstalk; Little Red Riding Hood; Rapunzel; Sleeping Beauty; Snow White.

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Fakelore

Fabrication claiming to be authentic folklore; also called *pseudofolklore*. Richard M. Dorson introduced the concept in an article in the *American Mercury* in 1950. For more than two decades, Dorson remained the principal American academic voice fighting against the spread of fakelore. He wrote against literary, commercial, and political producers of fakelore, and within folkloristics, both his definition of fakelore and his often polemical broadsides against what he perceived as dishonest popularization and distortion remained largely uncontested. Only during the 1980s did the reflexive examination of folklore's history lead to a theoretical examination of the concept, as well as to an effort to integrate "fakelore" into the larger European discourse on "folklorismus."

Fakelore was subsumed into a number of emergent discussions on the ways in which folklore, politics, and commerce intertwine. Folklore has always been a powerful agent in nationalistic attempts at cultural legitimation, and similarly, ethnic groups have revived and invented traditional heritage to enhance their cultural identity in multicultural societies or to bolster their claims for political independence. The globalization of the Western market economy has led to the further commodification of folklore, that is, the preparation of seemingly unique cultural goods or performances for mass consumption. Given the pervasive nature of the politics of culture, labeling such processes as "fakelore" and excluding them from study could eventually no longer be upheld.

Dorson's initial targets were Paul Bunyan stories, which he portrayed as not based on oral tradition but as literary fabrications potentially designed to boost the image of the lumber industry. Next, Dorson attacked Benjamin A. Botkin's highly successful *Treasury of American Folklore* and its regional spin-offs. Using the treasuries as an example of fakelore, Dorson postulated a distinction between properly documented oral folklore collected from real people in the field and rewritten materials that, from Dorson's point of view, misled the gullible public. During the Cold War period (1960s–1970s), Dorson expanded his attack to include not only commercial fakelore but also the ideological manipulation of folklore, targeting in particular Communist creations of workers' lore. He also

used his arguments in an unsuccessful attempt to forestall a legislative cut of federal funding for folklore research by presenting the properly trained folklorist as an important servant of democracy, capable of obtaining genuine knowledge of the traditional ideas of the anonymous millions.

Dorson's formulation made manifest the latent authentic-versus-fake dichotomy in folklore studies and put it to use in solidifying folklore's place in academe. He portrayed folklorists as the only academics capable of recognizing, documenting, and analyzing folklore—subjected to interpretation by the untrained, authentic folk materials would be spoiled. In the 1980s, the analytic attention paid to the notion of tradition seriously undermined the assumed dichotomy between the genuine and the fake. This debate has brought forth an appreciation for the created, invented aspects and the often consciously strategic deployment of all expressive culture in settings such as ethnic festivals, political propaganda, and, most pervasively, market settings such as the tourist trade.

Regina Bendix

See Also Authenticity; Folklorismus/Folklorism; Invented Tradition.

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Family Folklore

Traditional expressive behavior and its products that are transmitted by family members to family members and that pertain to relatives, family events, and family ways of being and doing. Family folklore includes stories, jokes, and songs

about family members and events, as well as the ways relatives share those items with one another; festivals the family celebrates, such as religious and national holidays; festivals that celebrate family, such as weddings, reunions, and funerals; foods, cooking instruction, ways of eating, and ways of gathering to eat within a family; family naming traditions; a family's ways of dancing; expressions and gestures a family uses; visual records of family life, such as arrangements of items inside and outside the home, photographs, photograph albums, videotapes, embroideries, and quilts; occupational, song, story, and craft traditions carried on within a family; and fieldwork methods used within family settings.

A review of folklore studies shows that folklorists have long been welcome in the homes of families. Once back at their desks, however, most professional and amateur folklorists before the 1970s discussed the rich material they collected in families as regional or ethnic, religious or occupational folklore. They approached the family as a source of folklore materials, not as the subject of their study.

Several folklorists, though, published a family story or two as "family folklore," usually without analysis, in state journals. Then, in 1958, Mody Boatright put out the call to folklorists to collect "an important source of living folklore"—the "family saga," featuring individual stories with a variety of themes that preserved a family's way of seeing itself in history. Interested in a generic approach, Boatright asked what forms and motifs made up the family saga. A second mode of inquiry, a small-group approach, came in 1961 when Kim Garrett suggested that every family that recognizes itself as a unit has its own traditions, including stories, taboos, and expressions.

In the mid-1970s, the study of family folklore burgeoned. Folklorists' growing interest in folklore as communication within and between small groups, their continuing interest in contextual studies, the focus of feminist scholarship on women's lives and concerns, the consideration of more privatized forms of folklore such as personal experience narratives, and the airing of Alex Haley's television series *Roots* exploring his African American family's history, all contributed to an increased interest in studying the family as the subject of its own folklore.

Family as a Folk Group

Many family folklorists follow the lead of L. Karen Baldwin, who suggested in 1985 that the family is not just a group that generates its own traditions but rather is the "first folk group, the group in which important primary folkloric socialization takes place and individual aesthetic preference patterns for folkloric exchange are set" (Baldwin 1985). The family, then, is the social base of folklore.

Family Group and Differential Identity

Families offer the opportunity to study how folklore differs within a group since most families exist as conglomerates of subgroups—as households and

“branches,” as gender and age subgroups, as subgroups of individuals who resemble or act like each other, and as other subgroups that families identify as important to themselves. Family members often tell different versions of the same story for their own, compelling reasons. Age groups within families have differing traditions. And families constantly change as they add in the traditions of other families through marriage. Thus, different racial, ethnic, and class traditions must be negotiated as newlyweds from two different ethnic groups, for example, prepare to celebrate Christmas or Hanukkah for the first time. When children are born, all titles and some nicknames in the family—father, mother, sister, and brother—shift in one great generational wave to grandfather, grandmother, aunt, and uncle. Hugo Freund’s work with one family’s Thanksgiving reveals how relatives’ differing perceptions of celebration create different meanings for the same family event.

Family Folklore and Idiosyncratic Forms

Much of folklore is identified by its transmission and variation through time and space. One family’s folklore, though, includes much material that does not resemble any other family’s material in content, though it may be similar in structure. For example, most families have words they use for taboo subjects, such as the words a child may use to indicate a need to go to the bathroom. One family’s word may never occur in any other family, but structurally, most families have such words. Thus, family folklore offers the chance to study materials in this more individualistic, privatized sphere.

Adding New Topics to Family Folklore Study

Because many of the first family folklorists worked with their own families and were bound by family requests for privacy, little discussion of the painful side of family life emerged until researchers turned to studies of many different families outside of their own. The work of Steven Zeitlin and others in the Family Folklore Section of the Smithsonian Institution’s Festival of American Folklife, for example, shows how families experiencing divorce or the abandonment of the family by one parent used ritual and storytelling in the reconstruction of their single-parent family. Elizabeth Stone, interviewing families across the United States, records family members’ stories of abuse and abandonment and how individuals transformed stories about hurtful relatives into stories that could lead them down new and healthier paths of life.

Incorporating New Materials into Family Studies

In addition to photographs, videotapes, embroideries, quilts, and other documents of family history and tradition, family folklorists in the last few years have studied newspaper obituary poems, miscarriage announcements in African American newspapers, and narratives about family pets.

Widening the Definition of Family

Although most published family folklore studies to date concern extended families made up of heterosexual married couples and their children, all families are open for study, including one-person families with support systems, two-person families, single-parent families, blended families, households of nonrelated friends, and gay and lesbian families. Joseph Goodwin's research on gay male families, for example, discusses the structure of gay families as that based almost totally on levels of closeness, in addition to the families' use of nicknames, jokes, stories, and ritual. Increased study of family and homosexual folklore may bring explorations of ceremonies of commitment and now-legal marriage ceremonies in Denmark and Norway, as well as work on the effect of AIDS on homosexual and heterosexual family traditions. Artificial insemination, egg-donor programs, surrogate mothers, and increasingly complicated adoption cases also may affect family folklore discussions.

Scholars of family folklore have much to contribute to the current national melee over "family values," a phrase used to signal "conventional, heterosexual family" rather than a discussion of any family's moral and ethical foundations. Family sociologist Jan Dizard discusses the debate—and its underlying paradox:

On the one hand, unconventional families are accused of threatening the values and commitments for which families stand. On the other hand, when they attempt to demonstrate those very same commitments and values, they are denied the opportunity to incorporate them into their lives. For most Americans, familism and the conventional family are so strongly associated that efforts to infuse nontraditional living arrangements with the values and commitments of familism seem like yet another assault on the already fragile family. Thus cohabitation, communal and group living arrangements, and homosexual couples, no matter how deep and conventional the sentiments and commitments that bind them, are judged by many as a threat to the very idea of family.

Future scholarship may see more family folklorists writing of the traditions alive in all forms of committed relationships.

Indicators of Societal Concerns

Many folklorists see family traditions, especially stories, as indicators of broader, societal concerns. Stanley Brandes has studied family narratives of lost fortunes that are told by white, lower-middle, and working-class citizens of the United States. He finds that the tellers of such stories are seeking to deflect onto ancestors the anxiety they feel for not achieving top economic success in a capitalist country that maintains that all individuals can become economically successful. Alan Dundes, Ed Walraven, and Janet Langlois have considered parent-child

interaction as it is configured in dead-baby jokes, stories of child throwaways, and legends of La Llorona in a garbage dump. Kathryn Morgan has discussed her African American family's use of their stories as "buffers" to protect the family from the ravages of racism. And Marilyn White has used her African American family stories to describe interracial and intraracial relationships in rural Virginia from 1865 to 1940.

Transmission

How traditional materials are passed down through extended families has been the subject of several studies. Lucille Burdine and William McCarthy, for example, show how folklore is not handed down "en bloc" from person to person, generation to generation; rather, each element of folklore finds its own sympathetic channel of transmission in different members of a family. Other studies by Baldwin, Margaret Yocom, and Jane Beck discuss gender differences in transmission, as well as attitudes of ownership and deference between generations.

Gender Studies

Folklorists have been concerned about the ways in which gender intersects with family folklore. Some have turned to evidence of gender-role stratification in stories. Others have explored how gender difference influences folkloric forms and processes. Baldwin and Yocom, for example, have studied how family stories and storytelling differ among men and women in their Anglo-American and Pennsylvania German families. They found women's telling to be more collaborative, interruptable, and filled with information and genealogy; men's telling, by contrast, is often uninterrupted and more competitive, the story beginnings and endings are formally marked, and the men's stories "make a point worth telling." Yocom has explored gender differences in the transmission of woodcarving and knitting skills in an extended Anglo and French Acadian family in Maine. And Thomas Adler's study of gender and family food preparation shows that men's cooking traditions in the family are often limited to one or two celebratory meals a week—often Sunday breakfast—or to outdoor meals with meat; women cook the mundane, everyday, diversified meals.

Processes within One Family

Studies that look closely at how one particular family performs its traditions have interested scholars such as Patrick Mullen and Susan Roach, who have looked at how a couple encounters and resolves conflicts within family storytelling and how quilting reveals the cultural and familial values of the family. Many studies already mentioned, such as those by Baldwin, Freund, White, and Yocom, also explore traditions and traditional processes within one family.

Genre Studies

Folklorists have puzzled over the generic nature of family stories and how the individual stories relate to the whole of a family's repertoire. Family stories, often brief and elliptically told, usually do not take the form of legend, folktale, or memorate. Boatright and William Wilson see family stories as anecdotes that together comprise a larger "saga" or "novel" and emphasize that each anecdote must be heard in light of other anecdotes for the larger story to be understood. Baldwin stresses that a family's "narrative" is a "composite of changing and interchangeable parts" and that since no one person is the ultimate source, many people must be heard so their "piece" of the "narrative composite" can be included. Zeitlin details the similar themes that sweep through family stories in the United States, themes that revolve around the characters of family members (heroes or heroines, survivors) and the transitions in family histories (migrations, courtships).

Family as Context

Folklorists primarily interested in craft, occupation, and storytelling have turned to families as sources of information. Though family folklore is not the subject of their studies, much about the family context of tradition can be seen in their work. Beck's work with the last basket maker in Vermont's Sweetser family and John Burrison's study of the pottery families in Georgia show how families amassed and passed on their skills.

Family Folklore Fieldwork

Discipline-wide and regional fieldwork guides have often described family folklore fieldwork as ideal for the novice folklorist because it is easily gathered. As more and more folklorists began working with their own families, however, the discussion about such personal-family fieldwork deepened. Baldwin, Yocom, and Susan Sherman have detailed concerns particular to such fieldwork; they and others also have challenged the notion of "objectivity" as an impossible goal for anyone and a counterproductive one for personal-family field-workers in particular. These scholars have discussed the importance of including one's self in family activities as a member of the group, as well as the necessity of exploring and using one's "involvements"; anthropological discussions of reflexivity and reciprocity and feminist reminders that the personal is political reinforce family field-workers' positions.

Fiction Writing, Nonfiction Writing, and Neotraditional Storytelling

Fiction writers, writers of biography and autobiography, and, more recently, neotraditional storytellers who perform for paying audiences incorporate family folklore in their presentations. Michael Ondaatje's description of a day's storytelling

in his Ceylonese family provides a taste of the riches to be found in such creations:

We will trade anecdotes and faint memories, trying to swell them with the order of dates and asides, interlocking them all as if assembling the hull of a ship. No story is ever told just once. Whether a memory or funny hideous scandal, we will return to it an hour later and retell the story with additions and this time a few judgements thrown in. . . . All day my Aunt Phyllis presides over the history of good and bad Ondaatjes and the people they came in contact with. Her eye . . . will suddenly sparkle and she will turn to us with delight and begin “and there is another terrible story.”

Studying family folklore, then, offers researchers the opportunity to preserve and enjoy family traditions and to question the concept of family and the nature of folkloric creations.

Margaret R. Yocom

See Also Feminist Perspectives on Folklore Scholarship; Gay (LGBTQ) Studies and Queer Theory; Gender.

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Feast

Ceremonial meal that reaffirms social solidarity while providing culinary gratification to an assembly of individuals. A feast is the sensuous and symbolic display of food and a quintessential metaphor for a surfeit of consumption. As eating beyond the point of satiation, feasting is forever shadowed by its obverse: socially mediated hunger, food asceticism, or fasting. In addition, feasting often has sacrificial connotations. Humans may share with deity in the consumption of specially consecrated foods and ritually slain divine victims.

Although food customs and habits vary significantly from culture to culture, feasting often occurs at key points in a community's food supply cycle: sowing, first fruits, harvest, beginning of the hunting season, and so on. Cosmic events relating to the agricultural cycle also may cause feasting: the change of seasons, the new year, or the appearance of moon, sun, or stars. As symbolic imitation of hypertrophy, bountiful feasting provides a means for redistributing an abundant harvest or kill in the spirit of celebration and thanksgiving. Mundane work responsibilities usually are suspended on feast days, during which hard work is compensated by the meal.

Feasts often are scheduled to mark special periods in the life of the individual. Here, banqueting is one element in a complex of celebratory events, including ceremony, procession, or dance. Birth, circumcision/naming, weaning, confirmation/initiation, marriage, retirement, anniversaries, or funerals are some of these life-passage events. Solidarity between social groups may be invoked through exchanges that include food sharing, as in the case of potlatch funerary feasts of the Native American cultures of the Northwest.

The term *feast* (from the Latin *festum*) has a specialized use to describe major celebrations in organized religion and is often used interchangeably with *festival*. Feast days are devoted to celebrations of faith and are times to refrain from profane work (aside from the work of food preparation). Feasts usually occur in relationship to fasts or other penitential observances in the religious calendar.

Until the latter part of the twentieth century, writers on Jewish tradition used *feast* to discuss the weekly Sabbath, the first day of the new lunar month, and a



Every year on the eighth day of the fourth moon on the Chinese traditional calendar, people celebrate the Feast of the Drunken Dragon, Feast of Buddha, and Feast of the God Tam Kung. The Drunken Dragon dance is now an important folk activity in Macao, featuring dancing fishermen with wooden dragon heads and tails. The dancers, shown here in 2009, imbibe copious amounts of wine, which they spit out in ritual manner, while the organizers will distribute rice for blessings. (Sayid09/Dreamstime.com)

number of annual calendar celebrations: Rosh Hashanah, Sukkoth, Pesach, Shavuot, Hannukah, and Purim.

Agape, or love feast, is the shared celebration of early Christians that is connected with Eucharist practices today. The Western Christian church distinguishes several festal cycles. Sanctoral or movable feasts such as Easter or Pentecost fall on different dates each year. Temporal feasts, also called feasts of obligation, occur on fixed calendar dates. These include Sundays; the feasts of: Nativity (Christmas), Circumcision, Epiphany, Ascension, Holy Trinity, and Corpus Christi; and the five official saint's feasts: St. Joseph, Sts. Peter and Paul, Assumption, All Saints, and the Immaculate Conception. Localities celebrate feast days for their patron saints; families may celebrate on individual members' name days. Other feasts in world religions are scheduled at the conclusion of the fast of Ramadan (Islam), at key points in the life of Buddha (Buddhism), and during Holi (Hindu).

Feasting emphasizes excess and bodily processes and is usually a feature of festival representations and allegories. The medieval Feast of Fools coincided with the Feast of Circumcision. This temporary inversion of social strata burlesqued

ecclesiastical procedures, often featuring the election of a Lord of Misrule, Pope of Fools, or Boy Bishop.

Recent scholars have highlighted the importance of gender in food practices. Food is often controlled by women and may be used by women to control and transform the self and effect change within a community.

Emily Socolov

See Also Custom; Festival.

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Feminist Perspectives on Folklore Scholarship

A theoretical reorientation of the discipline that encompasses the gendered nature of all aspects of this academic pursuit, bringing to light the hitherto neglected area of women's expressive behavior and entailing the construction of new paradigms centered on women's experience both as folklorists and as folk.

Conscious and unconscious gender biases, especially biases against women, have pervaded the discipline of folklore since its inception. Such a statement could be made about many academic disciplines. This is quite likely a reflection of the patriarchal nature of Eurocentric society more generally, but it is a particularly disturbing commentary on a field of study that purports to pay scholarly attention to individuals and groups who have been marginalized or entirely omitted from historical and contemporary written records. Gender as a particular area of theoretical discourse usually has been neglected by folklorists, both male and female, but a few folklorists, mostly women, have begun to rectify this imbalance in their research, scholarly writing, and teaching. Although gender and women's studies are not synonymous, feminist theory's emphasis on women's roles can be employed to highlight men's roles as well. For instance, emphasizing the distinction between the traditional expressive behaviors of women and men illuminates a folk group's particular ideas about gender as a whole. In contrast, the virtual

equation of men with culture in folklore theory leads not just to the absence of folklore *about* women and performed *by* women but also to the omission of that which is specifically men's lore. The solution to this dilemma from the perspective of feminist scholarship entails challenging implicitly male-oriented paradigms and constructing alternative and oppositional models that incorporate women's experience within the realm of folk culture and performance.

It has been a slow and arduous task to change the historical orientation of the discipline. Few publications focusing on gender and folklore appeared between 1975 and 1995, and those that have seen print frequently have been subjected to such extensive revision and scrutiny that their timely publication has been impossible. Furthermore, such scholarly writings—and more specifically those produced by women—are largely missing from the “folklore canon,” that is, the academic books and articles accepted by folklorists as most significant to the field, such as those that appear on the PhD reading lists of major folklore departments, those that receive major disciplinary awards, or those that are included in histories and overviews of the field. Courses on gender and folklore, women and folklore, and/or men's folklore are not regarded as standard offerings for most folklore curricula, and the number of female faculty hired by the major folklore departments and programs is insufficient. Not only do the majority of folklorists neglect the gendered aspects of folklore but folklorists who are women also find themselves in situations that involve the unequal distribution of status and power.

It is of special note that this disciplinary gap persists at a time when most folklorists are proudly discussing new directions in the theoretical underpinnings of the discipline, explicitly questioning who they are and what they study. Edited volumes with titles containing phrases such as “new perspectives,” “frontiers of folklore,” and “urban folklore” and consisting mostly of contributions by men have been partially responsible for changing the shape of the field. Academic discourse during the early and mid-1970s gave rise to an innovative approach to the study of folklore—one that emphasized performance and context, behavior, communication, and process, bringing about more dynamic definitions of “the folk” and “folklore” and breaking down rigid traditional genres so that they became regarded as emergent, flexible social phenomena rather than normative, mutually exclusive categories. Still, although this new perspective has greatly benefited the practical and theoretical study of folklore in general, it has done little to give the folklore of and about women its proper place in folklore scholarship. An exciting new concept of social group now characterizes the discipline, but attention to gender and related concerns is often lacking; the voices of women, both folklorists and folk, remain largely unheard, and their presence goes unnoticed in this reexamination of the field.

Nevertheless, some academics have developed gender-oriented scholarship in folklore and in other related disciplines, such as anthropology and literary studies. The recent evolution of feminist folklore scholarship was initiated by the

concerted and successful attempt to identify and validate women's traditions, leading to the political interpretation and reinterpretation of these gender-based materials and paving the way for the utilization of feminist theory at all levels of data collection and analysis.

Folklorists who employ feminist theory and methodology have incorporated these advances in their research, promoting new ways of thinking that have radically changed their disciplinary outlook. Although genre theory and the performance perspective enriched the discipline with their event-centered focus, feminist theory examines a broader range of materials and acknowledges a greater time depth in the generation of folklore. For feminist folklorists, the study of folklore begins when a member of a folk group initially learns how to produce or perform an item of expressive behavior, and it continues as this individual decides to actively engage in artistic communication and, later, to transmit this traditional knowledge to others. A feminist folklore perspective thus explores the initial production of folklore and its subsequent reproduction. Moreover, it includes the criticism of the final product and/or performance, as well as a critique of the entire procedure by the folk community and the folklorist. This approach also entails an investigation of the creation and/or re-creation of particular forms of folklore by various performers in different time periods. It is, therefore, significant to recognize that, in addition to highlighting the role of women in the study of folklore, bringing to light entire areas that have been neglected, feminist folklorists have also significantly changed the theoretical orientation of the discipline.

Earlier folklore publications had indirectly addressed the omission of gender and women, but it was not until the 1975 publication of *Women and Folklore* (initially a special issue of the *Journal of American Folklore*) that women's folklore began to be explicitly regarded as a legitimate area of academic focus. Challenging inflexible boundaries and predetermined dichotomies such as those promoting the oppositions of male/female, public/private, culture/nature, and powerful/powerless, the various authors in this volume examine the prevalent images of women and the subsequent genres through which women's creativity has been viewed, suggesting that new images, genres, and disciplinary directions need to be developed in the study of women and folklore. This collection of exploratory essays falls short of providing a theoretical basis for the study of women's expressive behavior, but it does serve to focus attention on an emergent area of folklore research. Unfortunately, this book was not followed by the spate of scholarly articles on gender theory or women's expressive behavior that the volume editor, Claire R. Farrer, and the other essayists had hoped to spark; few articles or books providing a theoretical framework for an approach to women's or men's expressive behavior specifically, or artistic communication between men and women more generally, have been published to date. The twenty years following Farrer's 1975 publication, however, witnessed the formal establishment of the women's section within the

American Folklore Society and the subsequent publication of a newsletter devoted to furthering gender awareness within the discipline. Furthermore, conferences, symposia, books, and scholarly articles specifically addressing gender, women's folklore, and feminist perspectives are beginning to become recognized components of the study of folklore, both nationally and internationally.

Published in 1982, *Spiders and Spinsters: Women and Mythology*, written by Marta Weigle, details the images of women in men's myths and rituals in Eurocentric societies, calling for further research that would look to different cultural traditions and women's mythologies within those traditions. There is a wealth of fascinating material in this book, but it suffers from the lack of both critical commentary and an overall synthesis. Echoing the earlier assertions of the essayists in Claire R. Farrer's edited volume, Weigle's writings, including her subsequent 1989 volume, emphasize the need for a reevaluation of traditional categories and the establishment of new and more flexible paradigms that would give women a significant role in the symbolic realm of cultural mythologies and folklore. In fact, this latter point illustrates a major contribution of feminist theory to folklore scholarship in general and is characteristic of all of the publications and conferences discussed in this essay; they are solidly situated within the contemporary, "postmodern" discourse that eschews arbitrary divisions in all areas of knowledge, affirming instead the multidimensional aspects of experience.

Frank A. de Caro's *Women and Folklore: A Bibliographic Survey* (1983) is a useful compilation of publications on women's folklore, folklore about women, and related topics, taking great strides in the task of reclaiming this body of lore for serious consideration and study. Similarly, "Women and the Study of Folklore" (1986), written by Rosan A. Jordan and Frank A. de Caro, provides an excellent overview of this topic, although it is limited primarily to verbal art. This article locates discussions of women and folklore in the public arena, appearing in *Signs*, a well-respected journal that incorporates academic perspectives from diverse disciplines. Although most of the material included in these two publications is not distinctive from a theoretical or methodological perspective, there are far-reaching philosophical implications in such attempts to create and validate the scholarship of gender, discovering differences not *between* folk groups and genres but *within* such groups and preestablished expressive categories.

Recently, other folklore scholars, primarily women, have published articles that highlight women's roles as folk performers and practitioners of artistic communication, whether the communicative mode is verbal or visual. They have challenged the idea that domestic implies insignificant, revealing the considerable power women wield in the private domain, as well as the way in which women's forms of folklore reflect the serious concerns of community life. Furthermore, they discuss situations in which women are effective performers in the public sphere and focus on material items created by women that serve as symbols of

cultural identity and social continuity. Finally, these scholars point out that women's humor is not only distinctive but also artfully used to negotiate gender interactions, often in a manner that is oppositional or contestational.

Ten years after the publication of Farrer's groundbreaking edited volume, *Women's Folklore, Women's Culture* edited by Rosan A. Jordan and Susan Kalcik appeared. The various articles included in this book serve to describe women's expressive behavior in a variety of situations, emphasizing its frequently collaborative nature. This volume is divided into sections that portray the private world of women and discuss performances within the intimate circle of family and friends, as well as outline the neglected areas of women's folklore in the public arena. Additionally, the essayists examine the dynamic interactions between public and private spheres and between male and female activities. The book as a whole, however, neither characterizes "new genres" that are exclusively women's genres nor provides a coherent theoretical framework within which to analyze these genres. A number of significant categories of women's folk performances are missing from this book, as is serious attention to the claim that "studying women makes a difference." This volume achieves significance by focusing scholarly attention on women and folklore, pointing to the need for the development of a theoretical framework that would give the folklore of and about women its proper place in folklore scholarship and lay the foundation for new orientations in data collection and analysis.

In 1985, concerned that feminist theory was not being adequately addressed or developed within contemporary folkloristics, a group of women scholars associated with the Folklore Program at the University of Texas, Austin, with the help of many other folklorists, formulated and organized an all-day symposium on folklore and feminist theory. This conference stemmed from the belief that folklore, like all academic disciplines, operates within certain paradigms that reflect the ideologies of the intellectual climate in which they originate. Thus, in the mid-1980s, gender bias in all forms of folklore scholarship—publication, fieldwork, research, and teaching—was reflected in the absence of the female and/or the dominance of the male, or it appeared as the denigration of female experience, all of which served the interest of male privilege. The need to address specifically such biases within the formal organization of folklore as a discipline was regarded as a necessary step in reorienting disciplinary concerns. The conference, officially entitled "A Feminist Retrospective on Folklore and Folkloristics," was part of the 1986 annual meeting of the American Folklore Society in Baltimore, Maryland. The purpose of the symposium was to discuss and debate not only women's folklore (as had a 1979 women and folklore conference held at the University of Pennsylvania and several earlier publications on women's folklore) but also and more importantly to introduce feminist theory into the study of folklore and bring folklore scholarship to bear on feminist theory. This included the consideration of why and how the analysis of women's lore changes the study of all folklore, why studying any

folklore with a feminist eye makes a difference, and how folklorists can contribute to the growing body of feminist scholarship that is developing in many disciplines.

Several publications directly or indirectly arose from this conference: special issues of the *Journal of American Folklore* ("Folklore and Feminism" edited by Bruce Jackson) and the *Journal of Folklore Research* ("Feminist Revisions in Folklore Studies" edited by Beverly J. Stoeltje), and two edited volumes, *Feminist Theory and the Study of Folklore* and *Feminist Messages: Coding in Woman's Folk Culture*. The conference and these publications have been variously successful in meeting the challenges as noted previously.

Published in 1993, *Feminist Theory and the Study of Folklore* edited by Susan Hollis, Linda Pershing, and M. Jane Young is a collection of essays that achieves a new degree of sophistication in feminist approaches to the study of folklore, calling into question not only case studies but also any theoretical formulations that fail to take into account women's experiences and perceptions. This book is an attempt to provide a resource for those seeking a more comprehensive view of the contemporary research being conducted on the intersection of feminist theory and folklore. Additionally, many of the authors in this volume focus on women's expressive genres to further an understanding of symbolic modes that serve women's own interests, distinguished by a process-centered female aesthetic. The book is divided into three parts, each addressing a specific theme and beginning with a theoretical introduction to that theme: feminist reexaminations of folklore theory and the development of the discipline, new ways of looking at the types of materials conventionally studied by folklorists, and the exploration of hitherto unapproached or little-recognized materials in folklore and feminism.

Joan Radner's edited volume, *Feminist Messages: Coding in Women's Folk Culture*, also published in 1993, takes a somewhat different direction, specifically addressing the coding of women's folklore forms rather than the more general application of gender-related concepts to the study of folklore. The articles in this volume draw extensively on feminist theory, pointing to a need for increased communication with feminist theorists across a variety of disciplines and conducting research in diverse cross-cultural areas. Coding, as it is defined by these authors, refers to women's frequently disturbing or subversive expressions of resistance, necessitated by the fact that their lives often have been controlled, dominated, or made peripheral by men. Such coding—sometimes deliberate, sometimes unconscious—is essentially ambiguous, conveying diverse messages and thus serving to protect women from those who might find such messages rebellious, and, therefore, threatening. Radner's book is especially significant in providing a framework within which to interpret women's creative practices that have conventionally gone unnoticed or have been devalued by the dominant culture.

All of the conferences and publications mentioned since the appearance of Farner's 1975 edited volume concentrated primarily on folklore of and about women

in cross-cultural contexts; the need for new images, genres, and approaches; and the significance of using feminist theory to illuminate this area of inquiry. Although the political implications of the analysis and interpretation of women's folklore was central to these discussions, the political nature of the fieldwork conducted by folklorists remained largely ignored until the 1990 publication of "Folklore Fieldwork: Sex, Sexuality, and Gender," a special issue of *Southern Folklore* edited by Camilla A. Collins. As indicated by the title of this particular issue, the authors emphasize gender in general and from a number of perspectives rather than choosing only to highlight women's traditional artistic behavior. Furthermore, this publication delineates the way in which folklorists discuss gender issues in their fieldwork, constructing personal anecdotes frequently passed on informally. Thus, the distinction between "folk" and "folklorist" becomes blurred as the folklorists create their own folk narratives to describe their experiences doing fieldwork. The various essays make it clear that sex, sexuality, and gender influence the methods employed by folklorists to collect data, as well as the sorts of phenomena that they choose to investigate. Here, too, rigid categories and boundaries are discarded so that the divisions between subject and object or folklore and folklorist become more fluid as fieldwork is characterized as made up of conversations rather than formal interviews and the establishment of friendships rather than reserved relationships. These authors stress the subjectivity of such interactions, pointing out the necessity for folklorists to recognize their own feelings and perceptions, as well as those of their interviewees. They also insist that folklorists give more thought to the attitudes and perspectives generated by the gendered aspects of all fieldwork, recognizing the need to negotiate and interconnect both men's and women's domains in the field.

Fieldwork that incorporates the perspective of "the other" is crucial to contemporary folklore scholarship, just as it is to the "new ethnography" in anthropology. Certainly folklorists must revise the authoritative way in which they write about "the folk," but first they must examine the biases inherent in their fieldwork. Too often, perhaps because of their academic status, folklorists are blinded by their own perceptions of their importance, entirely unable to perceive the frequently negative manner in which they are regarded by those they presume to study. Seen from this viewpoint, folklorists take on a more marginal position; rather than valiant discoverers of folk performances—usually male "heroes" who compose romantic tales of their fieldwork exploits—they are sometimes unwanted intruders who are skillfully managed in the everyday lives of the folk who themselves are fully aware of the value and power of their artistic behavior. Feminist scholars suggest that folklorists listen more carefully to what their informants say about the interrelationship of form, function, and audience in their expressive behavior—a point that is significant to the discipline in general, over and above gender considerations.

The volumes on gender or women and folklore published since the mid-1970s demonstrate that folklore and feminism can contribute a new understanding of women's marginal status in defined cultural contexts. On the one hand, women's marginality in male-dominated cultures is imposed; patriarchy enforces the rule of men from the very center of a society's organization (i.e., through the formation of laws, customs, and institutions that promote and preserve male domination) and leave women at its periphery. On the other hand, marginality encourages women to remain detached from the status quo. Their peripheral position may point to an incompatibility with established norms, leading to innovation, especially in expressive domains, and the development of alternative theories of knowledge. In reviewing women's expressive culture from a feminist stance, it is particularly important to look for ways in which women use their marginal status to creatively undermine the prevailing system by the invention or maintenance of traditions that signal the viability and appropriateness of a different way of thinking and behaving.

The feminist lens has given folklorists a new way of looking at the gendered nature of their endeavors. It is, however, important to recognize that other sorts of social concerns have remained largely unaddressed. For instance, none of the publications discussed here sufficiently incorporate feminist approaches to the folklore of women who are often doubly marginalized in our society by virtue of other factors in addition to their gender; these include women of color, lesbians, women with disabilities, and older women, who seldom have been the focus of folklore research. Although attempts have been made to fill this gap, it remains an area of folklore scholarship that deserves considerable attention in the near future. Furthermore, the broader focus on gender that feminism brings to folklore also points to the necessary inclusion of other critical concerns, such as the intersection of gender with race, class, ethnicity, and sexual identity.

Although feminist theory can expand and enhance folklore theory by generating new analytical models, this is not a one-way process. Women's folklore also can supply new data for and encourage the development of theories that define feminist scholarship. By providing a cross-cultural spectrum of traditional texts in various aesthetic media that address gender-related difference, women's folklore significantly enriches the examination of sexual difference in regard to hierarchy, power differentials, and the political imagination. A claim for the value of traditions that formulate female-centered considerations presupposes a need to allow folklore to speak for and about the traditions of women's difference as this is manifested in their material life activities and then given voice through a range of expressive means. These specific features of women's material life activity carry important consequences for understanding and constructing all social relations, not just those that pertain to a particular arena of traditional production or performance. Thus, both folklore and feminism conjoin in their mutual validation

of the regenerative aspects of social and cultural life, augmenting relationships of power with humanistic insights.

M. Jane Young

See Also Family Folklore; Gender; Women's Folklore.

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Festival

A periodic celebration representing through traditional observances, performances, rituals, and games the worldview of a culture or social group. Virtually universal, festivals may be the most complex social and symbolic events to persist in tradition. The etymology of the term goes back to the Latin word *festum*, originally meaning “public joy, merriment, revelry” and used commonly in the plural form, which suggests that a plurality of activities and celebrations characterized the festival from ancient times.

From the Latin *festā* derive the Italian *fiesta* (singular), the Spanish *fiesta*, the French *fête*, the Portuguese *fiesta*, and the Middle English *feste*, *feste dai*, and *festial*. The word *festival* was originally in English (and in French) an adjective indicating the quality of certain events, before it became the noun for the celebrations themselves. Secondary meanings of the term in different languages indicate



Knights ride in front of the royal court at a Renaissance Festival in Plantersville, Texas, one of the oldest and largest such festivals in the United States. (Amyemilia/Dreamstime.com)

single structural elements of the festival or forms of it. *Festa* were sacred offerings in Latin, a *feast* in English is a very abundant and joyful meal, a *fiesta* in Spanish is a public combat to show ability and bravery, a *festa* in Romanian is a malicious and humorous prank, and a *fête* in French is also a birthday celebration or simply a rather formal party. In current usage, *festival* may mean: a time of celebration, sacred and/or secular; the annual celebration of a special person or a memorable event; the harvest of a particular crop; a series of performances in the fine arts, dedicated to an author or genre or mass medium (i.e., Shakespeare, music, cinema); or generic gaiety and cheerfulness.

In the social sciences, *festival* commonly means a periodic celebration composed of a multiplicity of ritual forms and events, directly or indirectly affecting all members of a community and explicitly or implicitly showing the basic values, the ideology, and the worldview that are shared by community members and are the basis of their social identity.

Festivals traditionally have been classified as either secular or religious. This conventional dichotomy, made popular by Émile Durkheim, is currently maintained in the social sciences, despite the fact that each type of festival usually includes several elements of the other. Secular festivals resort to religion and metaphysics to deepen their impact and social significance; religious festivities always have political and economic aspects.

An equally widespread classification opposes rural and urban festivals. The former are commonly considered older, celebrating fertility and based on myths; the latter are conceived to be more recent, celebrating prosperity and based on history and legend.

A recent classification based on social and class structure tries to distinguish among festivals given by the people for themselves, those given by the establishment for its own sake, those given by the people for the establishment, and finally, those given by the establishment for the people. The latter category, by far the largest, is the modern counterpart of the *panem et circenses* (bread and circuses) of Roman times.

Festive behavior has been studied as a social phenomenon having one basic characteristic. Most scholars have underlined transgression and symbolic inversion as typical of social behavior at festival times; others have remarked that festival finally confirms the world as it is, and festive behavior parallels daily behavior, although in a more stylized form and with greater symbolic meaning.

Both approaches appear correct, albeit incomplete. Since a festival periodically renews culture by representing chaos and cosmos, nature and culture, disorder and order, it requires the simultaneous presence of all basic behavioral models of daily life (even if inverted, stylized, disguised, or distorted by the festive scenery). In fact, both symbolic inversion and intensification are present in festive behavior, together with the element of symbolic abstinence from work, play, study, or daily habits. During festival times, people who participate do something they usually do not, abstain from something they normally do, carry to the extreme consequences behaviors regulated by measure and common sense in daily life, and invert standard patterns of social life. Abstinence, reversal, intensification, and trespassing are all basic facets of festive behavior.

A morphology of festivals must indicate their minimal units and the possible sequences of these units. Such a theoretical operation, analogous to what Russian folklorist Vladimir Propp did for the constituent parts of the folktale, may aim at an archetype accounting for all festivals or, more accurately, at “oikotypes” accounting for a class of festivals of the same kind or from the same cultural area. Studies have indicated that several constituent parts seem to be quantitatively recurrent and qualitatively important in festive events. These units, building blocks of festivals, can all be considered ritual acts or “rites” since they happen within an exceptional frame of time and space, and their meaning is considered to go beyond their literal and explicit aspects.

The framing ritual that opens the festival is one of *valorization* (or for religious events, *sacralization*), which modifies the usual and daily function and meaning of time and space. To serve as the theater of the festive events, an area is reclaimed, cleared, delimited, blessed, adorned, and forbidden to normal activities.

Vladimir Propp (1895–1970)

Vladimir Propp was a Russian folklorist whose primary contribution to the study of folktales and fairy tales derives from the ideas in his structuralist work *Morfologiya skazki* (*Morphology of the Folktale*, 1928). However, his nonstructural contributions to the field also had and continue to have an enormous impact on scholars.

A professor first of German, then of folklore, at Leningrad University, Propp worked with a sample of Russian tales collected by Aleksandr Afanas'ev to arrive at his notion of functions, articulated in the *Morphology*. Significantly, although Propp criticized Antti Aarne's division of folktales into discrete tale types, Propp limited his analysis to Aarne's types 300–749, specifically, the wonder tale (which Propp's editor replaced with 'folktale' in the book's title). According to Propp, although characters in a tale are essentially interchangeable, the actions they perform occur in a stable sequence. To illustrate this principle, Propp cites different tales in which various magic helpers all aid the hero in travel to a distant land. Propp argues that it is the function of the helper in aiding the hero, rather than the helper's distinct identity, that is important.

Propp then delineates thirty-one separate functions that can potentially appear in any tale, beginning with the absention of a family member and ending with a wedding. These functions do not, however, appear in every tale. One reason is that Propp's analysis was biased toward tales with male protagonists. Alan Dundes, in his structural work based on the 1958 English translation of *Morphology*, further condensed these functions into related pairs such as interdiction/violation, lack/liquidation, and so on. All tale characters are compressed into eight types that are classified by common spheres of action: the villain, donor, (magic) helper, princess or prize, her father, the dispatcher, the hero, and the false hero. This classification is noteworthy for allowing scholars to consider tale characters by what they do rather than who they are.

Much of Propp's other work, including books and articles on epic, ritual, and humor, has not been translated into English. Only segments of his *Istoricheskie korni volshebnoi skazki* (*Historical Roots of the Wondertale*, 1946) and selected essays are available to the non-Russian reader. If *Morphology* is largely concerned with the structure of fairy tales, *Historical Roots* is an attempt to connect the content of fairy tales to the rituals and beliefs (especially those surrounding initiations) of pre-Christian, pre-class, and 'primitive' social reality. Propp's search for the origin of fairy tales in the material conditions of the people was influenced in part by the political climate of Soviet Russia; he faced censure for relying on the scholarship of folklorists in other countries.

Alternately criticized as a formalist and embraced as the father of structuralist folkloristics, Propp contributed a wealth of scholarship to the study of folktales and fairy tales.

Jeana Jorgensen

Similarly, daily time is modified by a gradual or sudden interruption that introduces “time out of time,” a special temporal dimension devoted to special activities. Festival time imposes itself as an autonomous duration, not so much to be perceived and measured in days or hours but to be divided internally by what happens within it from its beginning to its end, as in the “movements” of mythical narratives or musical scores. The opening rite is followed by a number of events that belong to a limited group of general ritual types. There are *rites of purification* and cleansing by means of fire, water, or air, or those rites that are centered around the solemn expulsion of some sort of scapegoat, carrying the “evil” and “negative” out of the community. If the rationale of these rites is to expel the evil that is already within, as in exorcisms, other complementary rites aim at keeping away the evil perceived as a threat coming from outside. These rites of safeguard include various forms of benediction and procession of sacred objects around and through significant points of the festival space setting in order to renew the magical defenses of the community against natural and supernatural enemies.

Rites of passage, in the form described by Arnold van Gennep, mark the transition from one life stage to the next. They may be given special relevance by being part of a festive event. These may include forms of initiation into age groups, such as childhood, youth, and adulthood, or initiation into occupational, military, or religious groups, and even public execution of criminals.

Rites of reversal through symbolic inversion drastically represent the mutability of people, culture, and life itself. Significant terms that are in binary opposition in the “normal” life of a culture are inverted. Sex roles are inverted in masquerade, with males dressing as females and females dressing as males; social roles are inverted as well, with masters serving their serfs. Sacred and profane spaces also are used in reverse.

Rites of conspicuous display permit the most important symbolic elements of the community to be seen, touched, adored, or worshipped; their communicative function is “phatic,” of contact. Sacred shrines, relics, and magic objects are solemnly displayed and are visited by individuals from within the immediate boundaries of the festival or pilgrims from faraway places. In sacred processions and secular parades, the icons and symbolic elements are instead moved through space specifically adorned with ephemeral festive decorations, such as festoons, flower arrangements, hangings, lights, and flags. In such perambulatory events, along with the community icons, the ruling groups typically display themselves as guardians and keepers and as depositories of religious or secular power, authority, and military might.

Rites of conspicuous consumption usually involve food and drink. These are prepared in abundance and even excess, made generously available, and solemnly consumed in various forms of feasts, banquets, or symposia. Traditional meals or blessed foods are among the most frequent and typical features of festival since

they are a very eloquent way to represent and enjoy abundance, fertility, and prosperity. Ritual food is also a means to communicate with gods and ancestors, as expressed in the Christian belief that Christ is present in the sacred meal of Communion, the Greek tradition that Zeus was invisibly present at the ritual banquets of the Olympic Games, or the practice of the Tsembanga Maring people of New Guinea who raise, slaughter, and eat pigs for and with the ancestors. In far less frequent cases, as in the Native American potlatch, objects with special material and symbolic value are ritually consumed, wasted, or destroyed.

Ritual dramas are usually staged at festival sites, as rites have a strong tie to myths. Their subject matter is often a creation myth, a foundation or migratory legend, or a military success particularly relevant in the mythical or historical memory of the community staging the festival. By means of the drama, the community members are reminded of their golden age, the trials and tribulations of their founding members in reaching the present location of the community, the miracles of a saint, or the periodic visit of a deity to whom the festival is dedicated. When the sacred story is not directly staged, it is very often hinted at or referred to in some segments or events of the festival.

Rites of exchange express the abstract equality of the community members, their theoretical status as equally relevant members of a *communitas*, a community of equals under certain shared laws of reciprocity. At the *fair*, money and goods are exchanged at an economic level. At more abstract and symbolic levels, information, ritual gifts, or visits may be exchanged; public acts of pacification, symbolic *remissio debitum* (remission of debt) or thanksgiving for a grace received may take place in various forms of redistribution, sponsored by the community or a privileged individual who thus repays the community or the gods for what has been received in excess.



Dragon Boat Race in Foshan, China, in 2009. The Dragon Boat Festival is thought to commemorate the Chinese hero Qu Yuan. Dragon Boat racing is now an international sport. (Guangliang Huo/Dreamstime.com)

Festival typically includes *rites of competition*, which often constitute its cathartic moment in the form of games. Even if games are commonly defined as competitions regulated by special rules and with uncertain outcomes (as opposed to rituals, the outcomes of which are known in advance), the logic of festival is concerned with the competition and the awards for the winner; the rules of the game are canonic, and its paradigm is ritual. The parts or roles are assigned at the beginning to individuals as equal and undifferentiated “contestants,” “hopefuls,” or “candidates.” Then, the development and the result of the game create among them a final hierarchical order—either binary (winners and losers) or by rank (from first to last). Games show how equality may be turned into hierarchy. Besides games in the strict sense, festival competitions include various forms of contests and prize giving: electing the beauty queen; selecting the best musician, player, singer, or dancer, individual or group; or giving an award for a newly improvised narrative or work of art of any kind or for the best festive decorations. By singling out its outstanding members and giving them prizes, the group implicitly reaffirms some of its most important values.

Athletic or competitive sporting events include individual or collective games of luck, strength, or ability. These have been considered “corruptions” of older plays of ritual combats with fixed routine and obligatory ending, such as the fight between Light and Darkness representing cosmogony; fights of this type were then progressively historicized and territorialized into combats between, for example, the Christians and the Moors or representative individuals, with the champion (literally meaning the sample) carrying the colors of the whole group.

In their functional aspects, these types of games may be seen as display and encouragement of skills, such as strength, endurance, and precision, that were required in daily work and military occupations; this was, for instance, the rationale of medieval mock battles. In their symbolic aspect, festival competitions may be seen as a metaphor for the emergence and establishment of power, as occurs when the “winner takes all” or the winning faction symbolically takes over the arena (or the city) in triumph.

At the end of the festival, a *rite of devalorization*, symmetrical to the opening rite, marks the conclusion of the festive activities and the return to the normal spatial and temporal dimension of daily life.

It is obvious that one should not expect to find all the morphological elements listed here in each festival, just as one should not expect to find all of Vladimir Propp’s “functions” present in every fairy tale. A complete festival morphology will correspond to the complete festive cycle, and several of its parts will form the configuration of each of the actual festive events. This fragmentation of the festive complex into events distributed all along the calendrical cycle follows the course of history and its trends of centralization and decentralization in social life, as well as the interplay of religious and secular powers and their division in the running of social and symbolic life and its “collective rituals.” Furthermore, in today’s

Western and Westernized cultures, larger and often more abstract and distant entities try to substitute themselves for the older, smaller, tightly woven communities as reference groups and centers of the symbolic life of the people. Today, we try to bring the audience close to the event by means of the mass media or to bring the event close to the audience by delegating smaller entities, such as the family, to administer the event everywhere at the same time; we also may try to fragment the old festivals into simpler festive events centered on one highly significant ritual. Such fragmentation is seen in the United States, where the ritual meal is the focus of Thanksgiving, the exchange of gifts is the highlight of Christmas, and excess is the hallmark of New Year's. Military might and victories are celebrated on the Fourth of July, and civic pride is championed at the Rose Parade. Carnavalesque aspects underlie Mardi Gras and Halloween. And symbolic reversal is nowhere more evident than in the demolition derby. Even the tradition of dynastic anniversaries is present, modified though it may be, in celebrations of George Washington's and Abraham Lincoln's birthdays; competitions are perfectly typified by the Indianapolis 500, the Superbowl, and the Kentucky Derby. Even the archaic tendency to consider the ritual games of the festival as cosmic events may be surfacing in the use of the term *world championship*, obstinately applied to events that, in the strict sense, are really encounters of local teams playing a culture-bound and territorially limited game, such as American football or baseball. Festive rites of passage take place on Valentine's Day, at debutante balls, and in drinking celebrations on one's twenty-first birthday and at fraternity and sorority rushes. Rites of deference and confirmation of status include presidential inaugurations, Father's Day, and Mother's Day. The archaic Kings and Queens of the May have their functional equivalents in the yearly beauty pageants of Miss, Mister, and Mrs. America. Plays have been grouped in various yearly festivals of the arts that range from Shakespeare festivals to the Oscars ceremonies in Los Angeles, through symphonies, jazz festivals, and fiddling contests. And the modern *ferias*, the county fairs, are numerous and ever present.

If not festival proper, such events are part of a festive cycle, a series of events that in other times and cultures would fall within tighter boundaries of time, space, and action. This festive complex is constantly changing and evolving. But with all its modifications, festival has retained its primary importance and continues to celebrate life, remaining the most important showcase for culture's values and worldview.

Alessandro Falassi

See Also Carnival; Custom; Feast; Fool.

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Fieldwork

Firsthand observation and documentation of folklore. Fieldwork is the key research act for most scholarship in folklore, anthropology, and oral history. In 1964, Richard M. Dorson wrote, “What the state paper is to the historian and creative work to the literary scholar, the oral traditional text is—or should be—to the student of folklore” (Dorson 1964). Today, few folklorists would limit the field-gathered information to “texts,” and many could not even agree on what the word *text* means, yet Dorson’s observation still holds true.

Fieldwork consists of observing and documenting people where they are and doing what they do. It is one of the three major modes of acquiring primary information in the social sciences. (The other two—statistical surveys and decontextualized interviews or performances—are rarely used in primary folklore studies.) Fieldwork information is gathered with various media: notebooks, film and video cameras, and audio recorders. Field-workers may seek items in active tradition (things people do now) or things in passive tradition (things they know and recognize and may even have an aesthetic for but wouldn’t, unless solicited, perform or utter). Field-workers may join in the events going on (*participant observation*), or they may pretend to be totally outside those events (except in large community events, such as festivals and parades, it is difficult for a field-worker to be totally invisible). They may be active in their pursuit of information

(interviewing, asking for items, asking for explanations), or they may be passive (waiting, observing, recording).

Some folklore researchers use preexisting print or electronic media as the sources of primary information (e.g., studies of the apparent scope, character, and function of folklore materials in commercial advertising or political speeches or folklore in the works of Homer, Shakespeare, and Mark Twain or folklore on the Internet). But such studies are predicated on ideas of folklore derived from fieldwork. Milman Parry and Albert Lord's hypothetical and theoretical work on the nature of Homeric performance and composition was extrapolated from their extensive fieldwork among Serbian epic singers. They were able to assert that certain materials in classical texts were grounded in folklore performance and transmission only because their fieldwork let them understand the character of such performance and transmission.

Even folklore scholars whose work is totally theoretical are dependent for the substance underlying their generalizations and speculation on the fieldwork of others. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to theorize cogently and relevantly about the meaning of folklore in a community unless someone had first gathered information about what folklore exists in that community and what functions the folklore performs. Comparative folklore studies (texts or behaviors from different places or times compared for differences in aesthetic or functional aspects) are predicated on the quality and scope of the field-gathered material.

Folklorists doing fieldwork may be looking for specific genres or kinds of folk behavior: ballads, recipes, survivals of older traditions in modern communities, modern folkways in technological communities, or the nature of folk performance. It is difficult to know the social meaning of an item of performance without knowing about the conditions of performance. For example, the place and function of ballads in a community are interpreted differently if many people in that community sing many long ballads on a regular basis to a wide local audience that knows and enjoys such ballads or if, by contrast, the performers sing their songs only when collectors come in from the outside to solicit them. The words and tunes may be the same, but what we make of them may vary. One may analyze a particular ballad text differently if it was learned from a book, a recording, a school chum, or a grandparent.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, scholars often examined texts alone, much as literary scholars examined texts of poems as freestanding items. Today, however, folklore texts are rarely examined without consideration of collateral information. Only through fieldwork can researchers gather the items, provide information for identifying folk genres, and locate the nature of folklore performance in ordinary life.

It is not just that scholars are more sophisticated now about the questions that might be asked; it is also that the equipment available today frees the field-worker

Informant

The person who has a competent knowledge of the target community's cultural performances and who is willing to share this knowledge with the field-worker. Although an informant usually is a member of the target community, he or she might also interact with the target community on a frequent basis as an accepted outside associate.

An informant's primary role is interpreting, from an insider's (emic) point of view, the different aspects of the target community's cultural system. Although the informant need not be an active bearer of the culture's traditions to function effectively, he or she should be thoroughly versed in what constitutes an appropriate performance of the tradition, and the informant should furthermore be able to interpret this performance in a manner that is consistent with the rest of the community's interpretation. Additionally, informants should introduce the field-worker to other community members who may have special knowledge or performance abilities that they will share with the field-worker.

The informant's roles will be fulfilled only after the field-worker establishes a truthful dialogue with the informant (occasionally this does not happen). This dialogue results from the field-worker's and the informant's realization that the informant is more than just a paid employee (if the informant receives some type of compensation); instead, the informant is the link between the outside world and the target community. The cultivation of this dialogue is further assisted by the field-worker's realization that the informant must be guided through a discussion if the necessary information is to be elicited.

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to ask more sophisticated or multidimensional questions. When field-workers had to take down all words by hand, approximations of narratives or tunes were sufficient. Now that machines capture the words and music, field-workers can examine context—not just context of performance but also context of recording, the relation between scholar and source. Put another way, it is no longer just the joke that is investigated. Rather, modern researchers ask a host of questions: Who tells which jokes to whom and under what circumstances? How are the jokes interpreted? Who laughs, and who does not laugh? What part do those jokes play in the social event going on? How does that redaction of that joke relate to others made of the same words? Is the meaning the same if the context is different? What is the relation between observer and observed? The whole reflexive movement in field sciences in recent years (see, for example, Clifford and Marcus's 1986 work, *Writing Culture*) is predicated on a technology that can document the observer at the same time that it documents the observed.

Fieldwork is a technology-driven endeavor. The kinds of questions one asks of field-gathered material are based on the kinds of information that can be gathered in or brought home from the field. Field-workers approaching complex events

will define their options differently if they have access to various kinds of image and sound recorders and know how to use them effectively and efficiently. Fieldworkers studying material culture have different questions and therefore may incorporate different technologies than field-workers interested in narrative tradition or matters of custom or belief. Field-workers trying to document the folklife of a community may need a wider range of technical expertise than field-workers focusing on genres or items.

Nineteenth-and early twentieth-century folklorists depended on simple recording devices and techniques, including notebooks and memory. They used bulky machinery to record musical performances on cylinders and then on large flat disks. These machines were capable of recording only a few minutes of performance before they had to be wound up and supplied with a new recording surface. Furthermore, unless the recordist struck a tuning fork or other device of known frequency at the beginning or ending of the recording, there was no way for a listener to know exactly at what speed these recordings were to be played. That meant listeners never knew if they were hearing the recordings at the right tempo or pitch. Because the equipment was so bulky, movement was difficult, and performers often had to be brought to where the machine was located. Cameras used large glass plates and required a great deal of light, either natural or flash powder.

What the great folklorists of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries provided us were not so much records of performances but rather interpretations or versions of performances—they were not only editors of what they found but also participants in the line of performers they documented. When, for example, folklorist Vance Randolph spent an evening listening to stories or songs and then went home and wrote up the stories he had heard or sat at the piano and worked out songs he had heard, he was doing exactly what many folk performers do.

Folklorists now can gather more complex field documents because they have at their disposal instruments that provide a record of transient detail that was impossible to obtain a half century ago, such as: small, automated, 35mm cameras weighing less than a pound that zoom from wide-angle to telephoto shots and focus and set apertures automatically, using film capable of making images in moonlight; video cameras easily held in one hand that record high-quality images in low light and high-fidelity stereo sound on tape, using rechargeable batteries that last two hours each; audio recorders controlled by crystals, with tapes that are therefore replicable on any crystal-controlled machine anywhere; and, for the truly sophisticated user, digital audiotape (DAT) machines with real-time coding. A field-worker can carry a full complement of this new equipment—video camera, still camera, crystal-controlled audio recorder, enough tape for a dozen hours of video and sound recording and enough film for hundreds of separate images—in a shoulder bag.

The effects of all this technology are multifold. First, the field-worker is capable of acquiring an enormous amount of information—far more than was ever

previously possible. Before mechanical means of reproduction were available, documentation of even the simplest text was at best an approximation, limited to what someone could write down in the midst of an event that could never be redone exactly. With early means of reproduction, it was possible to make crude recordings and obtain still photographic images in a narrow range of situations. With modern equipment, it is possible to get extremely accurate sounds and images in a wide range of situations. Second, the field-worker has been freed of the need to concentrate on capturing items (the machines do that) and allowed to consider more complex questions, such as the way various parts of performance or enactment interrelate or minute complexities of performance itself. The performance analyses of Dennis Tedlock, for example, would be impossible without accurate recordings that can be listened to again and again with equipment that lets the analyst find exact moments in performance. Third, the problem of how to get information has been replaced by what is to be done with the great mass of information so easily acquired. A nineteenth-century collector of ballads or animal narratives had no difficulty managing his information; it was easy enough to organize the songs and stories and provide simple annotations giving the specifics of performance. A twentieth-century field-worker coming home with videotapes, audiotapes, and photographs of a complex event has a far more difficult job of documentation, storage, and analysis.

In the field, the researcher looks at a world of nearly infinite possibilities—so many songs, dances, stories, images, recipes, redactions, processes, interactions, moments, movements, facial expressions, and body postures. Once home, the researcher deals with a world of specific and limited possibility: the kind, quality, and range of information brought home, no more and no less. What is not in the notes, on the film or tapes, or in memory is gone. Subsequent analysis will be predicated not on what existed out there in real life but on what made it back. Since field documents may be used in studies never envisioned by the field-worker at the time of the fieldwork, and since analysis may occur long after memory has had time to impose its confusions, proper documentation is of key importance in all fieldwork projects. Without notes on who was doing what and under what conditions the documentation and event occurred, sound recordings, videotapes, and photographs may, in time, be nearly useless.

Field-workers also deal with the problem of preservation. A large portion of the audio cylinders made early in the twentieth century, for instance, have already turned to carbon dust, and no one knows how long information on audiotapes and videotapes will last. Audiotapes made in the 1960s often present problems today because the recording material has pulled away from the backing. And notes made with felt-tip pens fade. The most lasting form of documentation is graphite pencil on acid-free paper. Such paper is enormously resistant to decay (it lasts centuries), and the graphite particles, imbedded in the paper fiber, are not subject to fading or oxidation.

The immediate result of fieldwork is the acquisition of various kinds of documentary materials. A long-term result is involvement in a range of ethical questions and responsibilities. To whom does the material one brings home from the field belong? What obligations are there regarding privacy and ownership issues? Who is owed what if material is used in a book or a recording or a documentary film? What obligations pertain toward other researchers working in the same area or on the same materials? Fieldwork is only one part of a complex series of personal, intellectual, and ethical acts and decisions.

Bruce Jackson

See Also Participant-Observation Method.

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Film, Folklore

A term commonly applied to a film that documents folklore for research and other purposes. Such films, when edited to be shown to an audience, are called, in the term coined by Sharon Sherman, *folkloric films*. The terms *folkloric film* and *film and folklore* also refer to nonacademic or so-called Hollywood films that use folklore as a major theme. Videotape use and production often are encompassed in the larger term of *film and folklore*. As the scope of videography increases and its

use continues to grow, video has become the medium of choice (at least until the next major technological development), and *folklore and video*—or, preferably, *folkloric videos*—will become the commonplace term, incorporating film within its definition, much as the current term incorporates video.

Compared to their contemporaries in the social sciences and other fields, folklorists began to use film as a tool at a much later date, but the film movement in folklore reflects all of the techniques and preoccupations of earlier filmmakers who created the field of documentary film. Like the “films of fact” shot in the early 1900s, folkloric films are often made up of short clips of interesting phenomena captured for posterity. The earliest such documentation of folklore on celluloid is a *March of Time* series film made in 1935, which depicts John Lomax interviewing musician Leadbelly (Huddie Ledbetter) and recording his folksongs for the folksong archive of the Library of Congress; a second film on Leadbelly appeared in 1945. American folkloric films were not produced again until the late 1950s. The first call for film reviews in the *Journal of American Folklore* (published by the American Folklore Society) did not appear until 1974. Despite this somewhat late acknowledgment of the importance of film, these reviews demonstrate the growing interest in film among folklorists during the 1970s when new theories about performance began to gain acceptance.

In Europe, short, straightforward camera shots of folkloric subjects were taken for documentation purposes by the Institut für den Wissenschaftlichen Film. After World War II, the institute sponsored a program in fieldwork to train ethnologists in the use of film equipment. In 1959, the institute published its own rules for documenting ethnology and folklore and demanded that field-workers document only authentic events and film them without elaborate camera work. The institute organized a film archive in 1952 and began editing the *Encyclopaedia Cinematographia*. These ethnological films, which are categorized first by world region, then by country, and finally by region within each country, are of great value for comparative folklore research. They are short and unnarrated and deal with only one subject, such as a children’s game from West Africa, a festival dance in South Africa, or the performance of an epic heroic song in Romania.

Other folkloric films have a heavily narrated and expository style similar to those documentaries made prior to World War II and on through the 1960s. Certain folkloric films utilize either a cinema vérité or post-vérité approach, which combines synchronous sound or voice-over with linear depictions for the recording of complex expressive events (including interactions, performances, and the many facets of creative processes) in their entirety. Yet others are reflexive and intersubjective, incorporating the filmmaker as one of the subjects. In the realm of nonfiction film, certain trends have become firmly established. Stylistically, then, the folkloric film does not differ from documentary and ethnodocumentary film.



Nanook prepares to harpoon a walrus in a scene from the first documentary film, *Nanook of the North*. Robert Flaherty wrote, directed, produced, and edited this landmark film in 1922. (Library of Congress)

On a theoretical level, many folklorists who use film are tied both to the models used by their documentary film forerunners and to the conceptual premises of early folklore scholars. Some folkloric filmmakers tend to focus on romantic visions of the noble savage or preindustrial folk. Just as this bias on the part of folklorists gave way to more enlightened notions of the folk as any people with a common tradition, filmmakers also shifted their attention from romanticism to examine present-day issues involving diverse groups of people. In folkloric films, one can find both attitudes existing side by side.

In *Nanook of the North* (1922), Robert J. Flaherty's romanticization of native Arctic life, the focus on the individual as a representative figure for a culture that Flaherty saw fading, and the involvement of Nanook and the Inuit in the filming process are elements of a filmic model that folklore documentary filmmakers emulated. In folkloric films, the rural often takes precedence over the urban and the past assumes greater importance than the contemporary. John Cohen's search for Child ballads in Appalachia, documented in *The High Lonesome Sound*, Jorge Preloran's documentation of little-known peoples in the isolated regions of Argentina, and Les Blank's depiction of Cajun and Creole culture in the Louisiana bayou all fit this pattern. Yet none of these filmmakers is locked into this pattern. All of them have examined very contemporary activities and the urban scene as well. Often, like Flaherty, they begin with a romantic, stereotypic notion of the folk for their initial films and then recognize a need to broaden the definition of their work as their film corpus grows.

Just as Flaherty selected Nanook, folklore filmmakers often choose a biographical “everyman” to represent the group. Les Blank, in several films, has Marc Savoy explain aspects of being a Cajun; Jorge Preloran looks at Hermogenes Cajo as an exemplar of religious folk artists; Bill Ferris documents James Thomas as a bluesman and storyteller; and Sharon Sherman presents quiltmaker Kathleen Ware and chainsaw sculptor Skip Armstrong. As one might expect with the passage of time and the changes in techniques and styles, such folklore filmmakers have taken Flaherty’s approach a step further by documenting people both as cultural or artistic representatives and as unique personalities. Having film subjects participate in the filming process, as Nanook did, is only now becoming a common means of sharing the authority for the film, as is evidenced by Zulay Saravino and Jorge and Mabel Preloran in *Zulay, Facing the 21st Century*.

Folklore filmmakers most interested in texts will often employ the techniques of montage inspired by Russian filmmaker Dziga Vertov. Like folklorist Vladimir Propp, Vertov was primarily interested in form. He thought that the recombination of filmic elements could create a new “truth,” which he called *Kino-Pravda* (film truth). In *Man with a Movie Camera* (1928), he not only shows a day in the life of Moscow, he also edits the material to demonstrate what he thinks about the subject he has filmed. Vertov reveals how film operates by showing himself at the editing table with the images he has shot tumbling into various places to create new meaning, thus anticipating a postmodern view of film.

Accused of concentrating on form rather than content by the Stalinists of the 1930s, Vertov lost favor with his government. His influence can best be seen in the work of avant-garde filmmakers such as Jean Luc Godard. In addition, Vertov’s Kino-Eye, which must “document from life,” is the precursor of cinema vérité, a technique aiming at film truth that was made popular in the 1960s with the advent of portable sync-sound equipment. French anthropological filmmaker Jean Rouch deliberately uses the term as homage to Vertov.

Vertov establishes reflexivity in film, showing the viewer the means by which representation is achieved. But unlike Flaherty and Rouch, who tried to incorporate the reactions of those being documented, Vertov’s film “truth” is solely the filmmaker’s own truth as he or she constructs it. In contrast, Flaherty wished to present the worldview of those he documented. These two approaches, that of Vertov and that of Flaherty, dominate documentary practices today. Neither practice is easily bounded or that distinct, except perhaps in terms of form. Whereas those who “play with” form are overtly providing viewers with their vision, other filmmakers still present their own stamp of authority while deluding themselves into thinking they are allowing their subjects to shape the film. Although one might suppose that Flaherty was reproducing the natives’ attitudes because he tried to include his subjects’ ideas, his methods for *Man of Aran* and *Moana* indicate otherwise. Vertov, despite his domination of the film, does reveal how his authority is

constructed. Both styles underscore how subjective film is, but Vertov's work is more blatant about the impossibility of objectivity. Likewise, the admonition of British filmmaker John Grierson that documentary must expose social problems has led to a number of films whose editing styles reveal the ideologies of their makers. In folkloric film, the montage structure employed in such films as Ferris's *I Ain't Lying* and *Made in Mississippi* and Blank's food films (e.g., *Garlic Is as Good as Ten Mothers*) provides a means for discovering what the filmmaker thinks about the subject being documented.

For folklorists, cinema verité provided the first real opportunity to document events from beginning to end and to allow fieldwork tools to match the new theoretical perspectives about folklore as human behavior established in the late 1960s. Long takes and sync-sound filming became the rage. At last, the people being studied could speak for themselves in sync-sound and provide their own functional analyses without the imposition of a narrator or scholar. A number of documentary films demonstrated to folklorists how filmmakers might focus on and document individuals to arrive at a "truth"; such films included *Salesman* (1969), which pictured the life of a door-to-door Bible salesman; *Showman* (1962), a portrait of movie mogul Joseph E. Levine by Charlotte Zwerin and Albert and David Maysles; *Lonely Boy* (1961) by Wolf Koenig and Roman Kroiter, about teenage idol Paul Anka; and *Don't Look Back* (1967), D. A. Pennebaker's film on Bob Dylan.

The problem was that cinema verité did not provide "the answer" folklorists wanted. If anything, it raised more questions. Films are edited to suit filmmakers' theories. Those films that seem most appropriate for documentary in general and folklore in particular acknowledge their power to seemingly represent experience and reveal the means by which they do so. Such films go beyond the ideals of cinema verité into the openly subjective realm of what Sharon Sherman terms *post-verité*, in which the art form of the documentary is a given. Whereas cinema verité was art masquerading as objectivity, post-verité unmasks the illusion of objectivity and displays it. For example, in *Gimme Shelter*, flashbacks confuse what is "real"; in *Woodstock*, an observational camera style is fused with split-screen images, sound mixes, and rhythmic shots chosen for their balance with the audio track. The long takes disappear into edited rhythms, as they do in Roberta Cantow's folkloric film *Clotheslines*. The interview, abhorred by cinema verité for proclaiming the constructed nature of film, may occupy a central role in post-verité, as in such folkloric films as Tom Davenport's *A Singing Stream*, Judy Peiser's *All Day, All Night: Memories from Beale Street Musicians*, and Paul Wagner's *The Grand Generation*. For *Paris Is Burning*, Jennie Livingston creates a post-verité film from a mélange of interviews, cinema verité, and intertitles.

In the United States, for the most part, cinema verité films were used to tell the stories of the "other people," those without access to media production. With post-verité, the "others" may become the cinematic weavers of their own stories,

directly addressing the camera as the “experts.” In recognizing the blatancy of film as art, post-verité films may also cross into the realm of reflexivity. In *Zulay, Facing the 21st Century*, Zulay Saravino takes over the making of a film about her culture and turns it into one about her transcultural experiences. Akin to Vertov, Saravino shows herself editing the film about herself. The window for objectifying people becomes a dialogue with and in film. In *Carnival in Qeros*, the carnival becomes secondary as the Qeros interact with John Cohen, striking a bargain for payment in alpacas in exchange for Cohen’s right to film the villagers.

Unlike documentaries, which look at people within the filmmaker’s own society, films that Sharon Sherman calls *ethn documentaries* tend to document the “other”—people who are conceptualized as being unlike the film team or ethnographer. Examples include Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead’s *Trance and Dance in Bali*, one of the first films to document a single event; John Marshall’s many films on the !Kung bushmen; Robert Gardner’s interpretative *Dead Birds* on the Dani of West Irian; Jorge Preloran’s film on the Warao; and Timothy Asch’s work on the Yanomamö and the Balinese. Folkloric films combine the goal of the documentary to record unstaged events with the goal of the ethnodocumentary to provide information about culture. As ethnographers have become less concerned with cultural overviews and more interested in *events* in culture (such as a feast, a funeral, a festival), their films have become more like folkloric films. The folkloric film focuses primarily on traditional behavior, documenting many of the most fundamental features of our lives, ranging widely from rituals, ceremonies, folk art, and material culture to folk narrative and folksong and to the lore of various peoples bonded by ethnicity, age, gender, family, occupation, recreation, religion, and region.

Unlike most ethnodocumentary filmmakers, the folkloristic filmmaker does not limit himself or herself to so-called exotic, primitive, Third World, or aboriginal peoples. In contrast, the folklorist, as Richard M. Dorson has pointed out, need not travel far to discover folklore being generated and can conduct fieldwork at the folklorist’s “back door.” It can be argued that those folkloristic filmmakers who are the most successful have, in fact, examined traditions in their own locales, sometimes even among their own families.

These differences of major focus and locale set the folkloric film apart from other documentary film traditions. Both documentary and ethnodocumentary filmmakers have included footage whose content is of interest to folklorists; for example, a Wolof woman making pottery, two Yanomamö narrators telling a myth, Bert Haanstra’s segments of hand glass blowing in *Glass*, and Vertov’s use of folksong in *Three Songs of Lenin*. Such films represent the precursors of the folkloric film, for they include folkloric material and predate the use of film by folklorists per se. Any film having folklore content might aptly be called a *folkloric film*. Just as anthropologists define certain films as ethnographic when

they successfully elucidate anthropological approaches or lend themselves to the dictates of anthropological research or teaching, the true folkloric film may be defined as one whose content deals primarily with topics that folklorists study and whose intent is to meet the dictates of folkloristic research and teaching. Such films include ones created about folklore by folklorists themselves or by nonfolklorists who are filmmakers or videographers recording folklore. Put simply, the point of these films is to document folklore.

The filmmaker's theoretical assumptions about folklore are disclosed by and determine the techniques that the filmmaker uses. Those films that purport to deal with folklore (in the broadest sense of creative expression) generally focus upon either (1) the individual performer or artists; (2) the community (region, family, occupational group) or the "culture"; or (3) texts, technological processes, or artifacts. Furthermore, notions of folklore as having a space-time continuum often generate films with a historical or topological focus.

Analyzing how filmmakers apply form to content offers a method for revealing their intent. Films that profile individuals or community members tend to demonstrate creative interactional processes and events. Such films are most often not narrated and are shot and presented in a *verité* or observational style, with sync-sound or the sound-over voices of the participants. Occasionally, a single event—as seen in the work of wartime documentarians and television films such as *The Murrow-McCarthy Debate*, as well as in the ethnodocumentary films of Bateson and Mead, Marshall, and Asch—has served as the organizing principle for certain works of folkloric filmmakers: John Cohen's *Carnival in Qeros*; Tom Davenport's *It Ain't City Music*; Bess Hawes's *Pizza, Pizza, Daddy-O*; and Sharon Sherman's *Passover, A Celebration* and *Tales of the Supernatural*. On the other hand, films that attempt to demonstrate technological processes, examine texts and artifacts, and set up typologies or reconstruct the historicity of folklore productions generally make use of narration and a montage of images that are unrelated in filmic time to actual events. This style also predominates in interpretative films in which a narrator explains either the action on the screen or the thoughts of the filmmaker (or the people in the film). For historic reconstruction, such as Pat Ferrero's *Hearts and Hands*, the narration may be assembled from the words of journal, diary, and letter writers. Such films are edited to convey the ideas of the filmmaker about the subject.

The reasons for these methodologies are readily apparent. If the filmmaker's concentration is upon people and their creative processes, then the film generally will allow these people to convey their own tastes and aesthetics to the audience. Narration may be used as a complement to add information lacking on the audio track, but individuals will speak for themselves. In this way, the individual shapes the work of the filmmaker, who must structure the film around a sequence of linear events in which the individual is engaged. Occasionally, that structure

is determined openly by both the filmmaker and the persons being filmed, and the process of the negotiation becomes part of the completed film.

A unique twist to the study of film and folklore is the popular use of folklore as the primary plotline or unifying thread for feature films. *The Serpent and the Rainbow*, for example, exploits the practices of voodoo. The urban legend about a babysitter frightened by a telephone caller is the basis for *When a Stranger Calls*. *Avalon* plays upon family and ethnic narratives to structure the larger narrative of family and ethnic neighborhood dissolution in the United States of the 1940s through the 1960s, using one family as exemplar. *When Harry Met Sally* relies on the courtship narratives of many different couples as a transition device.

Memorable in its re-creation of folklore is *Candyman*, in which a folklore graduate student conducts research on the legend or horror tale of “the hooked-arm man,” who has scared teenagers in lovers’ lanes for decades. In this film, the legend comes to life, and the man with the hook torments the graduate student. That which is being studied within the film becomes the framework for the film. With the popularity of Jan Brunvand’s books on urban legends, this genre of folklore is familiar to a vast audience, and thus viewers have undoubtedly seen the irony.

Nonacademic feature films in general release often incorporate folklore as a detail—for example, a woman singing “Barbara Allan” (Child 84) in *The Piano*. Animated films, such as *Anansi the Spider* and *John Henry*, are targeted at the educational market, but the folkloric films perhaps the most popular with general audiences are Walt Disney’s animated *Märchen*. From *Cinderella* to *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and *Beauty and the Beast*, the Disney studio has presented a number of “Disneyized” folktales to huge audiences. The viewers may accept these renditions as the original tales, an idea reinforced by spin-off products such as books, dolls, games, and other toys.

On a thematic level, a similar process occurs. Folk beliefs about vampires and werewolves have spawned a whole genre of horror films. Folklike heroes and plots emerge in stories created or adapted from books by screenwriters, such as *The Never-Ending Story*, *The Princess Bride*, and *Friday, the 13th*. Other visual forms of popular culture appropriate themes such as “the quest,” “journey,” or “adventure” found in folktale and epic, reconfiguring them in video and computer games. In these ways, popular culture “swallows” folklore, reinterprets it, and spits it out in a new form. The facile quality of video cameras has encouraged people everywhere to become videographers who document their lives. In essence, what filmmakers and videographers choose to record in both professional films and home movies or amateur videos often involves presenting a vision of the self by documenting the central aspects of life, such as rites of passage (birthdays, bar mitzvahs, sweet sixteens, graduations, weddings); calendrical and religious holidays (Christmas, Passover, Mardi Gras); and performance events (from children’s sports to ethnic festivals). Folkloric films also create biographies of individual folk artists, documenting the

traditional processes in which they are engaged (e.g., play activities, folk singing, craft creation). These subjects form the key narratives of the folkloric film and the folkloric video, which build upon these “narratives of life” by explaining how such events and processes function in the lives of those depicted. At the same time, filmmakers who document, interpret, and present folkloristic themes actually use such themes to present self-images. Thus, film not only offers a multilevel means of capturing facets of a culture, an ethnic community, a family, and/or an individual folk artist or performer, it also constructs a comprehensive image of the self.

Sharon R. Sherman

See Also Fieldwork; Popular Culture.

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Folk Culture

The customary beliefs, social forms, and material constructions of specific folk groups. Folk culture includes the totality of associated elements such as speech patterns, social actions and activities, beliefs, behaviors, ideology, and artifacts specific to the group. It arises out of the organizational core of the group's identity to reflect the particular aims, interests, standards, and activities of the group. As opposed to more academic forms of culture, it is learned by interaction and participation within the group rather than through formal channels.

Culture can be defined in terms of the learned patterns of behavior, beliefs, art, rituals, institutions, and expressions characteristic of a particular group and how these elements are expressed. This pattern of learning and transmission is not limited to strictly oral or strictly written forms of transmission—either or both may be employed in the learning process. Folk culture is both a representation and a reaffirmation of the total identity of a particular group, and it is learned by way of membership and interaction within the group.

Folk culture is usually viewed in contrast to elite culture. Some of the early definitions of folk culture focused on the idea that it was something separate from *urban* or *mass* culture, and that is representative of the beginnings of civilized culture. Folk culture was considered something that existed only within small, isolated, homogeneous, nontechnological groups, whose members were generally illiterate or nonliterate and lived in some form of pre-urban society. Early studies focused their attention on groups considered to be representative of pre-urban culture: peasants, aboriginal groups, or ethnic minorities, for example. Since the 1960s, studies of folk groups have broadened the scope of folk culture to include groups of any level on the folk-to-urban continuum and recognize that the folk culture of “rural” groups can and does manifest itself in new forms in an urban setting.

Closely allied with the concept of folk culture is the notion of *folk society*, a group of individuals who are organized around some common interest, shared institutions, and a common culture. The folk society is a self-perpetuating entity that bases its identity on shared institutions and culture. There is generally a dichotomy between folk culture and folk society, which views culture as the values, ideas, and symbols of the group and society as the actual mechanics, the way culture is represented through the social interaction of the group's members. Some scholars and studies have and do use the terms interchangeably and consider the distinction a moot point. To some extent, there is very little difference between the concept of folk culture and folk society, for the two do not exist in singular and separate states. However, the distinction between folk culture and folk society is beneficial for distinguishing between a study that focuses on the ideological constructs of a group versus one that focuses on how those constructs are manifested through group interaction.

The study of folk culture may encompass such diverse methodological tools as ethnography, folklore theory, cross-cultural comparisons, historical documentation, historic-geographic corollaries, psychological analyses, economic impact analyses, and a host of other methodologies. Folk culture studies also occur in a “hyphenated” form, in which one particular feature of the culture is the focus. For example, studies of material folk culture (alternately, folk material culture) focus on the material constructs of a particular group as representations of the group’s culture.

As noted earlier, the definition of folk culture and the focus of its study have changed. Early ideas of folk culture tended to be based on romantic ideas of antiquarian survivals, wherein the folk culture of peasants, whether their own or borrowed from their “betters” (*gesunkenes Kulturgut*) could be viewed as vignettes of our more civilized culture in its earlier stages. Some early ideas and studies focused on folk culture in nationalistic terms in an attempt to trace cultural lineage and establish ethnic superiority and like reasoning. Though the views of Romantic Nationalism are not in the fore of modern folklore theory, there are some applications in which such a study of folk culture has been used to establish tribal claims on property or recognition as a truly distinct group.

Richard Dorson pointed to the 1960s as the period in which folk culture studies were broadened by what he called a new type of folklorist. These changes are identified by a shift from concentrating strictly on rural groups and looking for romantic survivals to an acceptance of modern realities and a search for reinterpreted traditions in the urban setting and even emergent traditions. Studies have included changes and retentions in folk culture among urban immigrant groups, such as Hungarian steelworkers and Hmong and Vietnamese shop owners, as well as the uses of new technologies to carry on old traditions and even emergent traditions in gay and lesbian groups, occupational groups, avocational groups, and so on. As with earlier definitions and studies of folk culture, there is an interest in finding the continuities within which to identify the culture of the group.

Randal S. Allison

See Also Anthropological Approach; Folk Group; Folklife; Folklore.

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Folk Group

Usually referred to in academic literature as “the folk” (plural, “folk groups”), a social group whose members share a traditional culture; also known as the “common people.” From a sociological viewpoint, the term *folk* designates a group of persons whose relations are characterized by cohesion and a primary group’s patterns of social interaction.

A *primary group* (compare *Gemeinschaft*, or community) is differentiated from a *secondary group* (compare *Gesellschaft*, or society) according to certain criteria, including size, purpose, duration, patterns of communication (interaction), type of social control, and degree of inclusiveness (or how much of the individual’s life is involved in the group’s activities).

Typically, a primary group is small in number, of multiple and varied purposes, and formed with the intent of being long lasting; within a primary group, members usually interact via unrestrictive media and all available patterns of communication, typically face-to-face. Conformity to group rules of conduct (mores, folkways, and other social norms) is achieved through informal but very effective means (e.g., by generating a sense of shame, sin, or honor; by gossip; by fear of the supernatural), and group activities involve “the whole person” (from familial, economic, political, and related standpoints in both the personal as well as the impersonal aspects of life). For a member, life within the primary group is usually satisfying. By contrast, a secondary group is typically large in number and of specified and limited purpose(s), and it may be either transient or long lasting. Within a secondary group, members interact via restrictive media and limited bureaucratic channels and modes (usually in writing). Social conformity is imposed on members by means of formal laws and bureaucratic regulations affecting only facets of the individual contractually involved with the secondary group (e.g., knowledge of electronics in a large electronics-manufacturing corporation). For the individual, life within a secondary group lacks a sense of satisfaction and belonging.

Naturally, due to recent accelerated rates of social and cultural changes, only a few social groups will manifest all these criteria at once. Whether a social group may be viewed as primary or secondary is determined by a patterned combination of a number of these factors (e.g., a tribe may count the number of its members in the thousands or even hundreds of thousands, but other factors such as a stronger sense of belonging would compensate for this potential impersonality). Within a secondary group setting, primary groups characteristically develop and prevail. A folk group may be viewed as a primary group.

The term *folk* has been used in a variety of academic fields and over a period of more than one and a half centuries. Various nationalistic and political ideologies, in addition to recent academic orientations, have contributed to the development of a variety of interpretations of that term and have generated a number of controversies about who the folk may be.

As a discipline, folklore is historically a European science, emerging out of elite intellectual developments subsequent to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' philosophy of romanticism. Following the postulates advanced by the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), romanticists believed that human beings came into this world in a state of savagery, yet it was a noble state because nature accorded everyone freedom and equality. They also viewed “civilization” as corruptive, for it robbed individuals of nature's gifts of freedom and equality, as exemplified at that point in history by life under European imperial governmental systems. Longing for that past “state of nature,” romanticists began a search for the “noble savage” overseas, beyond the geographic and cultural boundaries of civilized Europe and its extensions in the new (colonized) world. Romanticists focused their attention on the tales, proverbs, riddles, songs, manners, customs, beliefs, and related traditions of peoples perceived then to be living at stages of human development closer to savagery and not yet corrupted by civilization. They also reflected on the meanings and inherent goodness of these “savage” forms of expression but discovered that inequality and loss of freedom already had marred the lives of those nations thought to be free of the evils of civilization.

The failure to locate the philosophical ideal of the noble savage gave rise to disillusionment and futility in the works of the romanticists. Yet they became aware of the cultural creations of the non-European peoples within whose cultures they had searched for purity, equality, and freedom. Subsequent reflections on residuals of the “noble state of savagery” led Romanticists to theorize that such a state also must have existed in Europe prior to the onset of and consequent corruption by civilization. This evolutionary notion led to the discovery in Europe of forms of cultural expressions similar to those gleaned overseas and thought to date back to the ancient past and its noble savage.

These materials characteristically were sought among the least “civilized” groups in Europe. Consequently, the association was made between a certain social group of lower-class standing and the cultural data resembling those gleaned from non-European groups. In England, such materials were labeled *popular antiquities* until William Thoms, in 1846, offered the term *folk-lore* as a substitute.

The word *folk* first appeared in ethnological studies in Germany as an adjective in such composite terms as *Volksleben* (folklife), *Volkslied* (folksong), and *Volks Glaube* (folk belief). In the English language, it was used first by William Thoms for the purpose cited earlier. Thus, from the time of its emergence on the academic stage, the term *folk* has been used to denote social groups other than

the cultural elite and similar social and cultural categories of a population; typically, it referred to the segment of the population whose members were perceived to have not been corrupted by civilization. However, with the fading of the romantic glorification of savagery, the introduction of the evolutionary theory, and the application by Sir Edward B. Tylor of that theory to the realm of culture, the term *folk* lost its connection with nobility and acquired new connotations. Among these are the following, identified by Åke Hultkranz:

- *Folk* refers to the nation. This definition is quite adequate in certain languages such as German (*Volk*), French (*pueblo*), Spanish (*pueblo*), and Arabic (*sha'b*); however, it is impossible in English.
- *Folk* designates the lower stratum (*Unterschicht*). This interpretation, given by M. Manhardt, Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer, and Hans Naumann, played a major role in German *Volkskunde*. It designated social masses who were unsophisticated and unanalytic. Since the 1920s, this distinction between the “elite” and the “folk” has been severely criticized.
- *Folk* refers to an old-fashioned segment within a complex civilization—civilization being complex and typically widespread culture characterized by advanced technological resources and spiritual achievements of high order (in science and art). In Europe and Latin America, the lower stratum was considered identical with peasant society and rural social groups. Robert Redfield described the “folk” as including “peasants and rustic people who are not wholly independent of cities.” In this respect, reference is to the concept of a dependent society or “half society,” which, unlike a “primitive” community, does not stand in isolation from the rest of the nation. By contrast, primitive cultures are excluded from the folk category because they are, at least theoretically, complete in themselves and are isolates.
- *Folk* labels the basic culture-carrying social stratum within a complex society. This viewpoint has been particularly emphasized by the American sociologists. It is especially applicable to large societies with a population composed of diverse ethnic groups, each with its corresponding culture (e.g., Italian, French, Japanese, and African American). One “culture” is perceived as the basic one; others are not.
- *Folk* denotes a social group connected by a common tradition and a peculiar feeling of communion, the basis of which is a common historical background. This mystical definition is based on a group’s *esprit de corps*; it allows for a very flexible view of the criteria according to which a primary group is reckoned, with an individual’s sense of belonging playing the decisive role.

More recently, folklorists and anthropologists have found these and similar descriptions of the “folk” unsatisfactory in light of a number of theoretical

considerations. The most dissonant of these is the fact that certain non-European social groups that could not be characterized as “folk groups” possessed folklore and that individuals from all walks of life—including the most sophisticated—use folklore during the course of their daily living.

Anthropologists sought to eschew the term *folk* altogether; consequently, such labels as *oral literature* (Robert Redfield) and *verbal art* (William Bascom) were proposed as substitutes. Some anthropologists (e.g., Ruth Finnegan) adamantly refuse to consider “oral literature” (in Africa) as folklore.

Seeking to provide a rationale for a folklorist’s presence among nonfolk groups, folklorist Richard Dorson adopted a radical form of the viewpoint expressed in Hultkrantz’s third definition, cited earlier. He stated that two conditions for the study of folklore were then, in the 1970s, being realized in sub-Saharan Africa. These were “the appearance of an intellectual class with a culture partly different from that of the mass of the people” and “the emergence of a national state.” Dorson explained that “in the tribal culture all the members share the values, participate in the rituals, and belong fully to the culture, even if some hold privileged positions as chiefs or diviners.” Meanwhile, “in the national culture a schism divides the society.” Dorson concluded that “at this stage of development the concept of *folk* becomes useful. Tribal culture, as it fragments under the impact of modern ways, turns into submerged folk culture in the new nation” (Dorson 1972).

Previously, in 1965, Alan Dundes had sought to redefine the term *folk* in a manner that would allow for the presence of lore among those who, according to academic definitions, may not be viewed as “folk.” He stated that the term “can refer to any group of people whatsoever who share at least one common factor. It does not matter what the linking factor is” (Dundes 1965).

Bold as these and other justifications may be, students of folklore should remember that “lore” is a category of culture, whereas “folk” is a sociological entity. Although it is believed that there is no folk without “lore,” it should be stressed that there is no person who is lore free. The likelihood that the presence of folkloric components in the culture that an individual shares with other members of the community would not automatically transform that individual into one of the “folk” is equal to the likelihood that the presence of an academic component in the culture of a genuine member of a folk group would transform that individual into a member of the elite.

Hasan El-Shamy

See Also Folk Culture; Great Tradition/Little Tradition.

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Folklife

The total lifeways of any human community, including its artifacts, arts, crafts, architecture, beliefs, customs, habits, foodways, costumes, narratives, dances, and songs, among other cultural expressions. In this sense, folklife means specific cultural creations, as well as the discipline for the study of the process and form of such creativity. *Folklife studies* refers to the discipline or scholarly movement and its sensibility for appreciating the culture of everyday life in complex societies. It also evokes the long-standing disciplinary dichotomy between oral culture and material culture that represents a major intellectual fissure within world folkloristics. The contemporary folklife studies movement asks its own scholars to be as attentive to the documentation and analysis of contemporary culture as they have been to rural, agricultural, and peasant historical and traditional life. Folklife studies challenges both academic and nonacademic sectors to appreciate, learn from, and analyze the cultural production of all people and communities within a society, not just the socially elite, academically trained, or politically powerful. Folklife especially emphasizes that scholarly attention be paid to all those cultures found within the context of the local region.

Within the European context, the foundation of the discipline of folklife studies can be observed in a long history of antiquarian interest evidenced in Latin and vernacular texts and in a series of royal questionnaires sent to municipalities essentially as inventories of the geography, buildings, trades, shrines, relics, customs, honors, and so forth of those territories, with an eye to their value as economic or political resources. There are several important sources in this regard. In the 1200s, Saxo Grammaticus's *Gesta Danorum* (The tales of the Danish people) described legendary accounts of Danish kings, as well as religious practices of the people. Olaus Magnus's *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* (History of the northern peoples) recorded a 1555 view of the countryside and people of Sweden. Philip II's 1575–1580 questionnaires (*Relaciones geograficas*) concerned the cultural and regional history of all elements of his Spanish empire (including Latin America). Swedish King Gustavus Adolphus's Council on Antiquities in 1630 commissioned its representatives to conduct comprehensive research on the old

objects, ideas, and practices of the king's subjects, as well as the geography of their regions. A 1789 questionnaire administered only to Catalonia by an official of the Spanish Crown inquired about cultural geography, agricultural practices, games and pastimes, labor organization, behavior during public festivals, and other similar matters. The questionnaires of 1811 sent to many of Napoleon's possessions also asked about diverse dialects, customs, and practices of countryside inhabitants. The Napoleonic example served as a transition point between the old-style royal surveys of local resources and the romantic nationalist concern with the particularities of cultural difference. Such writings suggest an early attention to recording historical and contemporary regional culture, with the idea of custom being specifically bound up in place and material life.

Folklife developed as a scholarly discipline in Scandinavia and Germany. Folklife studies was conceived within the context of a number of influential movements and ideas. European Romanticism had great enthusiasm for examining the lives of the peasant class, who, it was believed, maintained a simpler and less complicated style of life evocative of a cherished rural past. These qualities, according to the Romantics, were eroded by industrial changes, and they needed to be salvaged and documented. Folklife, therefore, developed because of the feared disappearance of the essential culture that scholars wished to study. Another major influence was the fervor of European nationalism, in which the identification of distinctive forms of culture could be used to help bolster national identity.

The primary genesis of the English word *folklife* comes from the Swedish *folk-liv*, a term formulated in the nineteenth century and defined as the life and ways of the folk (the common people or, more specifically, the peasant class) as subject to rigorous, empirical scholarly investigation. In 1909, the term *folk-life research* (in French, *étude de la vie populaire*; in Spanish, *estudio de la vida del pueblo*; in Greek, *laographia*; and in Norwegian, *folkelivsgransking*) was coined at the University of Lund when lectures in *Svensk folklivsforskning* (Swedish folklife research) were begun by Sven Lampa. This term was an equivalent of the German term *Volkskunde* (the knowledge of the folk, folklore), which first appeared in 1805–1808 when Clemens Brentano and Achim von Arnim edited and published their folksong collection *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (The boy's magic horn).

Volkskunde has been defined and explained in many different ways by scholars in Germany, Switzerland, and Austria since that time. As *Volkskunde* developed, the emphasis was on the collection and preservation of the oral and material life of the German "Volk." Attention usually fell on the rural peasantry as the "Volk" or "people" in question, but scholars did not investigate the traditions of this group solely to gain a historical or cultural understanding of this perceived "lower level" of German society. Rather, *Volkskunde* scholars strove to understand something about the essential nature of the German people as a whole, and the study of peasants and their narratives and customs was seen as the key to this understanding.

Their research produced rich studies, with folk art and architecture as well as folk religion of the Roman Catholic and Protestant regions given special attention. *Volkskunde* developed into a complex discipline, and it experienced many challenges, changes, and crises. The most disturbing development was its use by the National Socialists prior to and during World War II for furthering their agenda of Germanic biological determinism and racial superiority. The discipline was used during this time to discern what was perceived as the true and false characteristics of German culture as evidenced in the pure German *Volkskunde* of the peasant. Today, German *Volkskunde* could best be described as the discipline that studies the variety of cultural traditions found within German-speaking countries. It is a vital field focusing scholarly concern on the central issue of culture and its empirical analysis as related to all segments of society, with a specific interest in contemporary issues such as the impact of mass media, representations and falsifications of the traditional, tourism, ethnic relations, and the culture of everyday life.

Folklife studies was greatly influenced by theories of history and culture current during the early twentieth century in Germany and Scandinavia. The philological and historical orientation of folklore studies, affected as it was by evolutionist and diffusionist theories of culture, had a profound influence on the work of the early folklife scholars. The historic-geographic mapping employed as a way to show the development of oral forms and the illustration of regional variations were applied to material culture as well. Peasant culture continued to be the source for discoveries of ancient remnants of history evidenced in the peasants' simple, pastoral lives. Scandinavian folklife research was influenced by the German ethnology of the pre-1914 period to follow a cultural-historical approach. This meant that it usually opposed evolutionary explanations of cultural transformation emphasizing diffusionary explanations of cultural movement and dispersion. Like the German-speaking scholars, the Scandinavian and Nordic folklife scholars emphasized the study of the culture area as central to typologizing a region's elements of material culture, such as houses, barns, carts, or farm implements. The distribution and relation of these elements to traditional peasant culture could then be plotted onto cultural maps to see evidence of development, similarity, and survival. After this was accomplished, it was the scholar's task to turn to well-documented archives and historical sources for purposes of comparison and assessment. This cartological and research method for studying all aspects of folk culture and their historical development became a hallmark of European folklife methodology, and folk cultural atlases were produced as evidence of this meticulous research.

Sigurd Erixon (1888–1968), an influential leader of Swedish folklife research (and the second professor of Nordic and comparative ethnology at the University of Stockholm), saw *folkliv* as a regional branch of general anthropology. In his conceptualization, regional ethnology was comparative cultural research on a regional basis with a sociological and historical orientation and certain psychological

implications. It emphasized the study of material life, custom, and belief, but Erixon also included oral folklore as a part of the overall picture. Erixon believed in the importance of collecting traditional resources, preserving them in archives, and seeing how they functioned for individuals, families, and small communities. German and Swedish folklife scholars promoted methods of empirical and data-based research, such as personal visits, extended field interaction, field interviews, questionnaires, indexes of materials collected, and direct correspondence for the study of still existing cultural expressions, as well as the examination of newspapers, travel accounts, wills, memoirs, diaries, autobiographies, collections of letters, and account books to assist historical work.

Gradually, especially after World War II, many scholars of European folklife began to expand the scope of their work away from survivalistic, static, peasant-based studies. Regional groups were no longer perceived as permanent static culture bearers. Erixon himself felt that, by this time, the phase of folklife collection was coming to an end due to the gradual dilution of traditional material among rural informants. Under the influence of functionalist theory in the 1940s and 1950s and a more sophisticated view of cultural systems, the focus of folklife research shifted away from the historical and developmental concerns of the researchers and their culture and toward the complexity of the informants' cultural context. As the twentieth century progressed, the objective, positivist research that emphasized elements in life (the hammer, the sled, the patchwork quilt, the song, the memoir) over the context and process of living (work, play, craft, speech, belief) gave way to a focus on research with humans as subjects. Scandinavian and Nordic ethnologists, like their German-speaking counterparts, still engage in historical research, but they also recognize the potential for folklife research in varying contexts of contemporary culture, including urban life, social class dynamics, and cultural transformation due to immigration and emigration.

An important corollary to the agenda of folklife research in Sweden was the development of a new type of museum. Beginning in 1891, Artur Hazelius (1833–1901) founded, near Stockholm, the first open-air folklife museum and called it “Skansen.” (Hazelius had previously opened the Nordic Museum [*Nordiska Museet*] to study Swedish peasant culture.) Skansen served as the public access to rural and town vernacular architecture from all parts of the country, placed on display in re-created natural settings. These rebuilt structures (e.g., farmhouses, manor houses, barns, a church) were complemented by furnishings brought from many areas to represent the variety and excellence of regional types. This museum concept presented the results of ethnological research of the material and social aspects of national and regional culture. Such research could represent everything from investigations of past methods of beekeeping in Wales and funeral customs in the Romanian countryside to the making of fish spears in coastal Norway and sickles, hooks, and scythes in Bavaria. These institutions exist to teach visitors



Rural farm and windmill at Skansen, an open-air folklife museum located on the island of Djurgården in Stockholm, Sweden. (Gallofoto/Dreamstime.com)

about the past as well as to conserve significant examples of cultural history. They maintain agendas of research, as well as being repositories of tape recordings, photographs, tools, furniture, clothing, decorative arts, paintings, and religious material culture—from silver votive offerings to carved wooden statues to hand-colored religious chromolithographs. Open-air museums, or outdoor museums of folklife, vary in size and quality, and they spread from Scandinavia to other locations throughout continental Europe, Great Britain, and North America. The folklife museum concept continues to exist in every size and international context, from sixteen different open-air museums in Romania to unmarked, even clandestine museums of revolutionary culture in Central America.

Folklife studies in Great Britain can be traced to eighteenth-century antiquarianism, but it was more specifically influenced by the *Volkskunde* and *Folkklivesforskning* movements and their historical-cultural approach to ethnological research. Retaining a strong tie to the study of traditional life—that is, rural, pre-industrial life—the documenting and analysis of material culture forms continue to be central concerns of folklife studies in Wales, Scotland, Ireland, and England. Work also has been conducted on calendar customs, festival, occupation, leisure, and systems of belief. The first institutionalized folklore and folklife research in the British Isles was conducted by the Irish Folklore Institute, commissioned by the Irish government in 1930. This development occurred because the Folklore of Ireland Society (formed in 1927 on a voluntary basis), with its

aim of collecting folklore, became overwhelmed and appealed to the government for assistance. The Irish Folklore Institute became a larger and better-equipped organization and was renamed the Irish Folklore Commission in 1935 under the leadership of James H. Delargy (1899–1980). In 1971, it became the Department of Irish Folklore at University College, Dublin. In Great Britain, the center for folklife research has not been university-based departments, of which there are few, but folklore institutes and museums, such as the Welsh Folk Museum at St. Fagan's, outside of Cardiff (opened to the public in 1948 and started by Iorwerth C. Peate [1901–1982]), and the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum (started in 1958 by E. Estyn Evans [1905–1989]).

As in Great Britain, there has been a historical division between folklife and folklore as applied in the United States. Folklore emphasizing the study of oral forms, especially narrative and song, was stressed, whereas the study of material culture, for example, was excluded from scholarly concern. Starting in the 1950s under the influence of U.S.-trained but European-influenced scholars Alfred L. Shoemaker (1913–) and Don Yoder (1921–), the concept of folklife studies was introduced to the American academic environment. Centering their interest on the ethnic, regional, and sectarian cultures of Pennsylvania, scholars of American folklife (as Yoder called it) concentrated on rich traditions of material culture, religious and medical belief, custom, festival, food, costume, and so forth. Yoder saw this approach as applicable and necessary throughout the American context, and he was especially interested in how the approach would add new dimensions to the study of U.S. history and the preservation of vernacular heritage. He conceived of this approach as part of a movement for the study of American historical and contemporary ethnography. Yoder also subsumed folklore—that is, the oral components of a culture—into his conceptualization of folklife, in agreement with the holistic understanding of traditional culture conceived of by his European counterparts. Among his diverse research interests were folk art and architecture, folk religion, folk medicine, folk cookery, and folk costume. American folklife's emphasis on all the elements of local culture and environment as keys to understanding the total picture of American civilization influenced the study of geography, art history, history, museum studies, anthropology, religious studies, historic preservation, and American studies.

Folklife as a discipline and movement has developed slowly throughout the world in a variety of professional and nonprofessional ways. Folklife institutes with extensive research libraries and archives are connected to universities or stand alone with state or private support. Elaborate and modest museums exhibit aspects of everyday life. Government-supported, public sector folklife research and festival presentation has become an important means of presenting folk arts and folk artists within a region, state, or country, as well as encouraging the financial support and academic study of such expressive culture. Regional folklife societies, clubs, and

voluntary associations have been organized with a focus on local traditional culture. Individuals interested in their own regions may lack a theoretical focus but enjoy the investigation of their own past and present cultural forms.

The multiplicity of regional names representing the expressions of traditional culture and the study of those expressions—folklore, folklife, ethnology, *folklivs-forskning*, *Volkskunde*—has not assisted the discipline of folklife and its search for an acceptable identity and presence in the academic world. Sigurd Erixon preferred to call *folkliv* research *regional ethnology*, which he proposed as an international designation for the discipline that studies national folk cultures or folk culture in general. He also worked to achieve a uniform notion of European folklife research, or “European ethnology,” among the diverse European academic communities. Participants at two meetings of folk culture scholars attempted to resolve this terminological issue. The first was the Arnhem Congress, which met at the Dutch Open-Air Museum at Arnhem in Gelderland in 1955 for the specific purpose of determining disciplinary terminology for folklore/folklife research. Certain delegates favored *ethnology* or *European ethnology* for the international name of the discipline. The German-speaking contingent opposed the decision to stop using *Volkskunde* because of its established presence in academics and government in their countries. In 1969, Scandinavian and Finnish scholars met jointly in Jyväskylä, Finland, and agreed that *etnologi* should replace *folkliv* as the official name for their academic subject. By 1970, German scholars also were agreeing with the change as a positive response to the search for an international term. Most contemporary academics in Western Europe now refer to the study of folklife as *ethnology*, with the thought of emphasizing its international aspect. Still, multiple names and institutional auspices responsible for what could be called *folklife* abound in various regions in European nations. For example, for local historians or individuals working in the public sector in the Romance-language-speaking countries, *folklore* or *culture populaire* are used, especially if the individuals are openly engaged in local promotion, preservation, or resistance. In France, *ethnology*, along with *ethnography* and *anthropology*, are seen as stages in the overall process of research into human cultures, whether at home or elsewhere. In Canada and the United States, contemporary terminological usage and conceptual understanding of “folklife studies” maintains its close association with folklore studies, and the two scholarly fields are understood as one discipline, referred to as *folklore and folklife*.

The term *ethnology* may exist, but it still stands for two disciplinary orientations: one with a material and social outlook (folklife) and the other with an oral folkloristic character (folklore). Standard European and North American conceptualizations of folklife describe it as the total traditional lore, behavior, and material culture of any folk group, with particular emphasis on the customary and material categories. In reality, folklife has represented the study of material

aspects of folk culture, especially rural, agricultural, and peasant culture, in the face of a predominant emphasis by scholars on oral and text-centered products of a community. This division can be best exemplified by the two contemporary academic journals of ethnology in Sweden, *Etnologia Scandinavica* and *ARV: Nordic Yearbook of Folklore*, or by the journals *Folk Life* and *Folklore* that serve folkloristic interests in Great Britain. This disciplinary split personality makes little difference to some academic communities and is a point of contention for other groups of scholars, especially those competing for meager financial resources or academic positions. Such divisions manifest themselves in the composition and direction of academic departments, museums, and government agencies; in the contents of scholarly journals, books, and other community publications; and in the funding of programs for the preservation and maintenance of living but sometimes barely surviving or visible traditional ways of life.

Folklife remains an autonomous discipline in the sense that it is not a composite of various disciplines concerned with the study of regional culture; however, it has not become a theoretically self-sufficient discipline. In this sense, folklife's greatest strength has been phenomenological, but it has provided little epistemology for its students. It continues to depend heavily on theory and analytical studies of history, material culture, architecture, performance, language, religion, culture, and society. Among the other disciplines that are related to folklife studies in sharing subject matter and a kinship with examining regional culture and that the folklife approach may have directly or inadvertently influenced are: agricultural history, rural and urban sociology, human relations, ethnohistory, oral history, ethnomusicology, social psychology, medical history, art history, architectural history, history of diet and nutrition, cultural geography, medieval studies, historical archaeology, historical preservation, local history, maritime history, industrial archaeology, history of technology, dialectology and linguistic geography, and cultural studies.

More than a field of otherwise excluded categories of expressive culture, the past and present folklife sensibility represents an integral approach to noticing, collecting, mapping, preserving, archiving, displaying, analyzing, protecting, and promoting the entire traditional creative and/or utilitarian output of the individual, family, community, region, or nation. These traditions may be transmitted by face-to-face communication, imitation, or various forms of media, such as print, film, computer, audio tape, telephone, or facsimile. Some folklife scholars also are working on the dynamic nature of the culture of the individual as an important corollary to studies of community tradition.

Contemporary folklife studies shares with folklore studies a common interest in describing, analyzing, and comparing the culture of small communities and the variety of traditional cultural systems interacting within such communities. These communities can be defined through shared geography; age; gender; occupation; leisure; and religious, medical, political, or other belief systems. Both

contemporary folklife and folklore emphasize aesthetic or artistic creation; historical process; the construction of mental, verbal, or material forms; and the relationship and balance of utility and creativity to such forms within a particular culture. Their methodology emphasizes intensive historical research using all available sources and field studies in which people speak for themselves and use their own aesthetic and classificatory systems to explain themselves and influence those scholars who have been allowed to understand, appreciate, and learn from their lives.

Leonard Norman Primiano

See Also Art, Folk; Craft, Folk; Material Culture; *Volkskunde*.

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Folklore

Term coined by Briton William John Thoms who, in 1846, proposed that the Anglo-Saxon compound *folklore* be used instead of the Latinate *popular antiquities* to describe “the manners, customs, observances, superstitions, ballads, proverbs” and other materials “of the olden time.” Although the word *folklore* appears to have been new at that time, an interest in the phenomena of the field was not. Rulers in different parts of the world had long ordered the collecting of heroic songs and other traditions through which they could glorify themselves. Religious leaders and learned scholars periodically gathered superstitions in order to expose them and weed them out. However, during the romantic currents in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Europe, intellectuals insisted that the traditions of peasants were valuable remnants from a remote past and should be collected before they disappeared. Thoms himself was inspired by the works of the brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. They in turn were indebted to Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744–1803) who saw in the arts of common people (*das Volk*) a reflection of the true spirit of a nation. It is not astonishing that the idea of folklore as a priceless national or panhuman testimony from antiquity gained force at a time when industrialization caused rapid transformations of traditional landscapes and ways of life. Also today, both the formal study of folklore (*folkloristics*) and the informal interest in it are linked to nostalgia for the past and uneasiness with modernity.

Long used primarily by English speakers, the word *folklore* is now accepted internationally. In some countries, it has replaced native terms; in others, it is used alongside them. But though nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scholars often investigated the origin and distribution of selected tales, songs, or games, folklorists today employ a wide range of approaches to study an impressive variety of verbal, material, and other expressive practices, including funeral laments, quilt making, and vernacular house building. Some investigate traditional tales to understand the structures of human thought. Others study storytelling as a social accomplishment, paying attention to the relationship between folklore forms, the people creating them, and other contexts. Many scholars, among them feminists and representatives of formerly colonized peoples, also are engaged in changing the biases that in the view of many contemporaries have been inherent in folklore research.

Folkloristic Perspectives

It has, not unexpectedly, proven difficult to define the term *folklore*. Recent attempts range from suggestions that *folklore* stands for “traditional cultural forms that are communicated between individuals through words or actions and tend to exist in variation” (Bengt af Klintberg) to the idea that it is “artistic communication in small groups” (Dan Ben-Amos). Many folklorists, however, dispense with definitions. Concerned that folklore not be regarded as lists of things, they prefer to look at it as one of several perspectives from which “a number of forms, behaviors, and events may be examined” (Elliott Oring). Among the many words used to characterize such perspectives, the following will be considered here: *folk*, *medium of communication*, *tradition*, *genre*, and *aesthetic processes*.

Folklorists around the world long took it for granted that the word *folk* connoted illiterate peasants and other groups that from the folklorists’ standpoints were old-fashioned or exotic. It was self-evident that these groups would be more tradition bound and would carry more folklore than the elites, who were believed to shun the yokes of tradition. However, during the last few decades, folklorists have increasingly come to think that the folk are all human beings. All people are involved in folklore processes, regardless of group—sometimes as performers, often as audiences. During their lifetimes, all people come to share the folklore of many groups, often crosscutting social and territorial boundaries.

Yet despite their conviction that all humans partake in folklore processes, folklorists continue to study some humans more than others. Some critics argue that folklorists privilege male informants and masculine forms, and others point out that folklorists continue to study and celebrate the creative expressions of poor and marginal peoples even as they ignore the deplorable living conditions of these individuals. The ways in which researchers come to terms with such issues are of central importance to the future of folklore study.

Mode of communication is another phrase that recurs in discussions of folkloristic perspectives. Scholars long emphasized that folklore is primarily communicated orally or in the practices of everyday life. They also stressed that, largely due to such informal channels of communication, folklore forms exhibit variations within standardized structures or plot outlines. Each time a traditional log house is built, there are changes of a kind that do not occur in industrially produced houses. In oral tradition, there are as many versions of the Cinderella story as there are narrators, whereas the wording of a poem written to be printed is not changed even if it is read aloud.

However, informal channels cannot be seen as the sole modes of communication because folklore has long been transmitted in numerous other ways, not least in legal or religious documents, in newspapers, or, recently, via television, video, and all the electronic media. Furthermore, traditional themes and structures have long been communicated through the works of well-known artists and authors.



Late-nineteenth century print depicts the child Moses floating in a basket on the river. (Library of Congress)

Western classical ballet shares some of its stylized and repetitive character with the European folktale, and Shakespeare often built his plays on folklore. Paradoxically, folklorists say that they study orally communicated forms, yet these forms are available for investigation thanks to various media, including print.

Some of the success of many films, comic books, and advertisements can be attributed to the fact that they are based upon ancient and widely circulating themes. Superman travels through space in a womblike vessel, only to be found and raised by a poor North American couple. His story has parallels in the stories of Moses, Cyrus, and other heroes who are similarly found as children floating around in small containers. Furthermore, identity changes are characteristic not only of Superman but also of most heroes and heroines of tradition. The transformation of the poor and orphaned fairy tale heroine into a rich and beautiful queen is reenacted over and over in films, magazines, and real-life stories. Some folklore themes have a psychological force that makes people re-create them century after century in different modes and media.

This brings us to *tradition*, a slippery key word in discussions of folkloristic perspectives. Basically, folklorists long regarded tradition as a store of standardized themes, structures, and forms of knowledge, more or less widely distributed in the world and at the same time adapted to diverse cultures. These themes, structures, and forms were said to have been passed on from generation to generation in tradition-directed groups.

Recently, however, folklorists have begun to think of tradition less naturalistically and more as a construction in which the past is always interpreted in a given present. In that sense, all tradition involves change. The interpretations of the past may be unconscious or conscious, unintentional or intentional. National symbols all over the world tend to be inventions based upon traditional forms that people perceive to be particularly valuable. The invention and selection of national symbols, therefore, involve important issues of cultural politics. This is true also of many other phenomena, such as those traditions that people select as the genuinely representative ones to be displayed in museums or presented to tourists.

Genre is another concept that has long been central to discussions of folkloristic perspectives. A genre may be seen as a bounded, distinguishable form characterized by a specific combination of stylistic traits and elements of content. People tend to make all kinds of culture-specific distinctions between expressive forms in their repertoires. At the same time, some stylistic or structural elements recur in the folklore genres of many cultures, among them symmetries, alliterations, parallelisms, and all kinds of repetitions. The tendency toward tripartite repetitions, for example, can be found in a variety of Western genres: fairy tales, textile patterns, interior decoration, houses, ballads, jokes, or games. In the traditions of some Native American peoples, on the other hand, four is a more common unit of repetition. But regardless of the specific numbers, repetitions help performers to achieve control over their materials. A firm, repetitive structure aids memory at the same time as it frees fantasy and improvisation. The given patterns simultaneously offer restrictions and creative freedom.

Some genres, such as proverbs and riddles, were long called “fixed” because they were believed to change less than “unfixed” forms, such as narratives. However, recent studies of folklore in social interaction make such distinctions untenable. Fixed forms change, too, since people in daily life often do not cite them in full but merely hint at them through tone of voice. More recently, folklorists have increasingly observed that genres are malleable social phenomena that people often blend and mix so that artful hybrids emerge.

Aesthetic process, finally, is a notion combining two important words in recent discussions of folkloristic perspectives. Although some scholars argue that the word *aesthetic* has become overemphasized in folkloristics, many others stress that not only are folklore genres aesthetically or poetically shaped but also that folklore is an artful way to affect social life. Indeed, it is because of its aesthetic force that folklore becomes a powerful vehicle through which people can examine or critique the lives they lead.

Paradoxes, National Paths, and International Trajectories

In folklore, people thus create or challenge, mirror or express, and maintain or disprove values that are central to them. Even the simplest anecdote may articulate profound existential questions. Here, we touch upon some perplexing paradoxes.

One is that people articulate both the best and the worst in their lives in folklore. To those who have fled from one part of the world to another, a few beloved songs, stories, or dishes become symbols of a precious inheritance that must be preserved in order to be reconstituted. Conversely, folklore can incarnate some of the worst aspects of life, such as detested symbols of racism and humiliating jokes directed at one's own group. Folklore can be invoked to hold communities together or cruelly separate them from one another.

Another paradox is that folklore materials, at one and the same time, can be international and national, global and regional, local and deeply personal. The patterns of a hero tale may be spread across the earth at the same time as one special hero incarnates the fate of a nation. The guessing game "how many horns has the buck" is ancient and widely distributed, but it lives in the fleeting moments when it is played; a simple, mundane event is thus placed in a vast comparative perspective.

Some of the paradoxes of folklore materials and processes are true also of the study of them. Folkloristics regards itself as an international field. At the same time, it is almost everywhere a construction in service of national or other political interests. The vagaries in the designations of the field are indications of this. In post-World War II Germany, the previously used term *Volkskunde* has increasingly been avoided because Hitler used it for propaganda reasons. Many Latin American scholars prefer *popular antiquities* over *folklore* because they associate folklore with colonial imperialism. In India, various native terms, among them the south Indian *janapada*, have been proposed as translations of *folklore*, a word that was introduced by the British during the occupation. In Sweden, *etnologi* is now used instead of the older term *folklivsforskning* (folklife research) because the component *folk* is regarded as a tainted leftover from the class-biased days when the objects of study were peasants and manual laborers.

Folklorists everywhere have been involved in nation building and concomitant class and power struggles. In the nineteenth century, when Finland was freeing herself from Sweden and Russia, the *Kalevala* epic, which scholars pieced together from songs collected in oral tradition, became the first example of literature in the native language. At that time, the field of folkloristics was a matter of national concern in Finland, just as it is today. And in recently reestablished nations, folkloristics plays an important part in efforts to recapture a national identity. In post-Soviet Latvia, for example, the most up-to-date scholarly methods are applied to reconstitute the country's folksong tradition.

In other previously colonized nations, the study of native folklore by native scholars is a way of self-assertion not only vis-à-vis colonial occupants but also vis-à-vis anthropology, in the sense that the scholars themselves or their forebears have been the perpetual "others" in studies by Western anthropologists. In the views of some contemporary Asian and African folklorists, anthropology is even more of a colonialist creation than folkloristics. Although there are well-established

folklore departments in such large countries as Japan, India, or Nigeria, the folklore of other African and Asian nations is still primarily studied by Westerners. But many scholars who now wish to investigate the folklore of their own countries face obstacles. Which of the many ethnic or tribal groups inside the borders are to study which other groups? To what extent is it possible or desirable to establish unifying folklore archives and folklore centers?

Over and over, folklorists have set out to collect, preserve, and protect national folklore heritages that have been seen as vanishing. Over and over, they have established national institutions, ranging from the impressive Folklore Archives in Helsinki to the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC. However, in recent years, some folklorists have worked to expand the national confines, calling for the safeguarding of folklore everywhere under the auspices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Yet such efforts raise many questions. Whose heritages and what materials should be safeguarded by whom? Will the peoples with power preserve and protect the traditions of the powerless? Future understandings of folklore depend to a great extent on how issues such as these are resolved.

Barbro Klein

See Also Folk Group; Folklife; Genre; Tradition.

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Folklorismus/Folklorism

Folklore outside its primary context, or spurious folklore. The term *folklorismus* has been applied to visually and aurally striking or aesthetically pleasing folk materials, such as costume, festive performance, music, and art (but also foods) that lend themselves to being extracted from their initial contexts and put to new uses for different, often larger audiences. The term surfaced first at the turn of the twentieth century as an analogy to *primitivism* when avant-garde circles took an interest in the expressive visual and musical forms of both “primitive” and Western folk cultures. Before the 1960s, the term appeared as *neofolklorism* in French and Russian discussions, referring particularly to the adaptation of folkloric materials in the high cultural contexts of music, art, and literature. In the German discourse, the term appeared in a sociological lexicon in 1958, but it was the folklorist Hans Moser who introduced it into German *Volkskunde* in 1962 and who urged his colleagues to study the seemingly fake in addition to “real” folklore and folk cultures. Over the course of nearly three decades and against much initial resistance, the discourse about and study of folklorism contributed to a thorough revision of *Volkskunde*’s canon, and it broadened the interdisciplinary scope and relevance of the discipline. Although the term itself is now rarely used, the issues originally addressed under the label have become major foci of research. For instance, the staging of folk dances or festivals for tourists, previously shunned as commercial and hence spurious, is now an important area of study. The same holds true for political applications of folklore, be this in historical eras, such as romantic nationalism or Stalinist communism, or in contemporaneous settings, such as ethnic territories struggling for political independence. Less contested but equally vigorous was the folklorism discourse in the Soviet Union and the former Eastern Bloc countries. Communist cultural policy openly valued the use of folk materials for altering societal patterns, and depending on the particular situation of academe in a given state, applied folkloristics and sophisticated analyses of folklorism-related processes occurred side by side. From 1979 until the mid-1980s, the Hungarian scholar Vilmos Voigt sporadically organized conferences on the theme and published the *Folklorismus Buletin*, which offered ready access and overviews to these otherwise difficult-to-trace developments. In the United States, a similar but more narrow discussion centered on the term *fakelore*.

The German folklorism discourse unraveled the dichotomous premise underlying the definition of folklore that had confined true folklore to communal, preferably peasant settings and excluded materials and groups tainted by the forces of modernity, such as industry or media. This eventually led to a differentiated view of cultural processes, involving folklore in modernity. Moser suggested *folklorism* as a term for the journalistic promotion of culture and the propagandistic use of folklore in branches of the economy. The term was purposely conceived broadly:

On the one hand, it addressed the interest in and nostalgia for things folk in an age in which mass communication and industrialization seemed to lead to a loss of cultural distinctiveness; and on the other hand, it encompassed the ways in which the need for distinctiveness was satisfied, strengthened, or awakened. Moser isolated three forms of folklorism: the performance of traditionally and functionally determined elements of folk culture outside that culture's communal context; the performance of folk motifs in another social stratum; and the purposeful imitation and creation of folklike elements outside any tradition. Moser also acknowledged differences in folklorism arising from political economies. In Western capitalist nations, he saw a preponderance of folklorism due to the expansion of industrial markets, ranging from tourism to commodity goods. In communist states, the cultural-political mission of folklorism was emphasized. And in developing, postcolonial nations, folklorism seemed to be used as a shield against radical progress.

Most productive for an introspective turn in *Volkskunde* was Moser's discussion of folklorism and *Rücklauf* (literally, flowing back) of academic theories and studies into communities and voluntary organizations. This necessitated an examination of the history and present of the cultural and political roles of public sector *Volkskunde* and opened up the way toward recognizing the discipline's interrelationship with nationalism. More fundamentally, such introspection revealed the dichotomous bias in the way "authentic" folklore was defined as separate from spurious cultural materials.

Although a majority of scholars throughout the 1960s and 1970s preferred to use *folklorism* as a descriptive label for everything not included in their discipline, a vigorous minority pressed for a complete revision of *Volkskunde*'s canon. Hermann Bausinger argued that contrasting folklorism with "genuine folk culture" drew the latter into a closed circle in which it inevitably mutated toward folklorism, that so-called first- and secondhand traditions merged in many respects, and that, by excluding one realm from research, scholarly results were inevitably falsified. Bausinger and Konrad Köstlin linked folklorism to processes of modernization and globalization that increasingly rendered identity into a consciously molded rather than a traditionally provided set of practices and symbols—a dynamic that has been closely documented for ethnic groups in the United States. Furthermore, industrialization had made possible the mechanical reproduction of what had formerly been unique items of expressive culture embedded in communal contexts. Rather than confining themselves to vanishing cultural enclaves untouched by modernity, German scholars recognized the need to study folklore's altering roles through time in settings such as political displays, tourism, and arts, crafts, and music markets.

The term *folklorism* has been increasingly abandoned because it lacks specificity. In its stead, more accurate explanatory concepts have been sought. The preparation and presentation of folkloric materials in emblems representing a more wholesome age or way of life has been called *cultural therapy*, the medicinal

effect likened to that of a placebo. The English terms *invention of tradition* and, more frequently, *revitalization* have been adopted to describe the use or manipulation of isolated folkloric materials for anything from efforts at regional promotion to politically inspired movements. The Hungarian Tamas Hofer has labeled the emergence of the discipline at the turn of the nineteenth century—intertwined as it was with the rise of nation-states—a revitalization movement whose ideology simmers latently in folkloristic theory and practice. The discourse on folklorism has contributed substantially to making folklorists conscious of these legacies.

Regina Bendix

See Also Authenticity; Fakelore; Invented Tradition.

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Folk Schools

A form of alternative, adult education that originated in Denmark. Folk schools are most commonly found in Scandinavia, although the idea has spread to Eastern Europe, Japan, Tanzania, and the United States, among other countries. While



Elise Bryant, left, and Naazima Ali celebrate during a gathering held to mark the anniversary of the Highlander Folk School (now known as the Highlander Research and Education Center) on September 1, 2007, in New Market, Tennessee. (AP/Wide World Photo)

their character differs from school to school, they tend to be focused on providing young adults with a wide variety of residential and extension courses over a short period of time, without exams or credentials.

Well known in the field of education, folk schools are of interest to folklorists because of the way that an explicitly marked folk culture—particularly oral traditions, music, and dance—has been part of the life and curriculum of these schools. The emphasis on folklore has often been integral to folk schools' mission within wider social movements and development interventions, whether as a way of connecting to local populations or as part of a larger endeavor to nourish patriotic spirit and nationalism.

Folk high schools were initially driven by the same Romantic Nationalist ideologies that motivated the collecting of folktales, sagas, ballads, and folksongs in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The founder of the folk high school movement is the Danish pastor N. S. F. Grundtvig (1783–1872), who shared many of the romantic nationalist ideas of Fichte and Herder. Like Herder, Grundtvig was interested in popular ballads and folksongs, and believed that the oral word—"the living word"—was the key to a nation's revival. Like other romantic writers, he wrote romantic poetry and rewrote Norse legends into the vernacular, contributing 1,600 hymns and songs to his church. Grundtvig felt that his era was in its old age, and the heroic spirit of the North needed to be awakened in order

for rebirth to occur. In order for this to occur, people must look at their image in mythology as if it was a mirror, not in order to exalt paganism or return to the past but to revive a new life, activated by the ancient spirit of the North.

Grundtvig saw the Spirit of the People (*folkeånd*) as an invisible and powerful force that acted in the community and that could only be expressed through the mother tongue. *Folkeånd* created a unity that was a living organism, surpassing the mass of individuals that made it up (a *folklighed*, corresponding to Jahn's sense of *Volkstum* and the French term *nationalité*, an essential national character). Grundtvig, like Fichte, felt that each people had a function or mission in the unfolding of world history, in accordance with God's plan. To Grundtvig, the Jewish people were the archetype of a nationality, from which he took the lesson that only a people with a strong and intense national character can become Christian. The people of the North had a strong national character between the eighth and thirteenth centuries, before they converted to Christianity. But the culture of the North died in the same century in which Dante was born, and the Renaissance suppressed national culture. The Renaissance exercised its tyranny in what Grundtvig called the School of Death or the Black School, devoted to books and a universalistic and cosmopolitan culture.

Grundtvig outlined his thoughts for a folk school at a series of lectures at Borch's College given during the summer and fall of 1838 that were open to the public; the hall was generally packed. Grundtvig described "a folk or patriotic high school" as "open to all the young of the populace, in which the mother tongue will have absolute power, and in which the uncomplicated but magnificent task is to enlighten the people as to their own natural temperament and their fatherland" (quoted in Fain 1980a, 66). He imagined classes given in the native language, folk-song, the history of the country, and the nation's literature. Teaching would be oral—stimulating lectures would animate and awaken the students to the Spirit of the people. Happy songs would be the sign of life at a school. The school would not prepare students for a profession and there would be no exams or diplomas. Grundtvig also felt that students should be between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five, as youth is the creative hour of the Spirit.

Grundtvig's dream of a folk high school at existing Sorø Academy never came to fruition. Instead, folk high schools were begun by people inspired by his ideas; they were small, private schools rather than the government-sponsored school Grundtvig imagined. In the 1830s and 1840s, some of the young theologians whom Grundtvig taught became pastors, and Grundtvig's ideas began to spread in the countryside. Some of the schools were founded by peasants who demanded education; others were founded by pastors and intellectuals influenced by Grundtvig. The folk school movement was a popular movement occurring in concert with sweeping changes in Danish society, as it transformed from roughly 1760 to about 1870 from a predominantly feudal social system to a modern, rich, and highly developed capitalist society. The folk school movement was only one of many peasant

movements. During this same time period, peasants founded other organizations to serve their needs, such as savings banks, newspapers, and political parties. These popular movements encouraged the transformation to a new political and economic system that allowed the lower classes to have more of a political voice and economic influence, but within the framework of liberal bourgeois democracy with an emphasis on personal, political, religious, and economic freedom. Though these movements sometimes appeared to be revolutionary, the revolutionary tendencies tended to be blunted—an issue that recurs in the history of folk schools.

The first folk high school was founded to preserve Danish-ness in the duchy of Slesvig. In the 1830s, people in the duchies of Holstein and Slesvig began to agitate for the two provinces to be united and freed from the Danish monarchy. In both duchies, the language of the church, towns, bourgeoisie, and administration was German. During the early 1840s, a Danish lecturer at Kiel University, Professor Christian Flor (1792–1875), tried to rouse the peasantry in Slesvig to their Danish-ness. Flor founded Rødding folk high school based on Grundtvig's ideas in 1844. In the program for the school, he wrote that here

peasants and burghers can receive such knowledge and skills as can be of use and for pleasure, not so much with regard to the individual's particular occupation and business as to his position as a son of the nation and a citizen of the state. . . . We call it a folk high school because members of every trade and profession can gain entry into it, even if it is to be established mainly for the peasantry and expects to draw its pupils mainly from that class. (Quoted in Skovmand 1983, 324)

The director, young theologian Johan Wegener, gave an inaugural speech, in which he said that peasants must regain their freedom and strength for Denmark to revive. At the school, peasants would learn to reflect on the problems of the patria, and their civic education would inspire the Spirit of the People. The goals of Rødding were to awaken and further intellectual life; to kindle love of the fatherland through the study of history, literature, and nature; to make students pursue farming intelligently; to develop students' emotional life and will rather than their memory and intelligence; and to develop their personal lives.

After Germany captured Holstein and Slesvig in 1864, there was an explosion of folk high schools across the Danish countryside. Some were created by farmers who wanted to use the school as an instrument in their political struggle against landowners and to gain the political skills to serve in parliament. The folk high schools were generally marked by the use of song and the importance of history. Grundtvig's *Handbook of Universal History, Norse Mythology* and *The River of Time or Outline of Universal History* (1829) were favorite references of folk high school teachers for their lectures. Folk high school students went on to

found other schools—both folk high schools and agricultural schools. At first the agricultural schools taught Norse mythology and history, but gradually they concentrated on more technical subjects.

From Denmark, the folk school model spread to other areas of Scandinavia, to Norway, Sweden, and Finland. Like Scandinavian folklorists of the time, those in the folk school movement felt that peasants were the most faithful to the national character, and the elite had adopted alien customs; the national language was the most important characteristic of the nation; and the divide between the elite and the peasantry threatened the unity of the nation. At moments of high nationalism, and times of “national crisis,” interest in folklore collecting and enrollment in and founding of folk schools peaked. As in Denmark, the folk school movement in other parts of Scandinavia was associated with the romanticism of linguistic nationalism and the use of the vernacular. The language of the peasant was considered to be descended from Old Norse, and only it could be used to express and revive the national character. Folk schools were also founded to prepare peasants for political participation, as parliaments introduced peasant deputies. They were founded not simply by intellectuals—mainly pastors and schoolteachers—many of whom were from peasant backgrounds themselves, but also peasants, albeit those who owned larger plots of land and could engage in political life, who were demanding education. Folk schools were one kind of education that was emerging during this time period for non-elites. This era also saw the expansion of free primary school for peasant children, as well as worker, technical, and agricultural schools for urban and rural adults.

Folk schools in Denmark continued to attract the attention of educators and social activists in other countries, and in the early twentieth century, some of the ideas and practices spread to Eastern Europe, Japan, and the United States, among other countries. Two of the most famous schools in the United States shaped by the Danish folk school movement have been the John C. Campbell Folk School, founded by Olive Dame Campbell in 1925, and Highlander School, founded by Myles Horton and others in 1932, both located in Appalachia and attempting to meet the needs of local people and foster their social, political, and economic development. Olive Dame Campbell explicitly founded her school on the Danish folk school model, because she saw the folk schools as crucial to the transformation of Danish society from feudalism to democracy, a process that she saw also occurring in Appalachia. Her school taught local people Danish folk dancing and arts and crafts and began several agricultural cooperatives. But her romantic view of Appalachia meant that she concentrated on cultural revival and revitalization, rather than its power to organize communities politically, as Myles Horton at Highlander sought to do. While Horton, like Campbell, visited Danish folk high schools, he drew his inspiration for Highlander School from multiple sources, including Jane Addams’s Hull House, as well as a pragmatic sense of what worked in particular, local conditions. In the 1930s and 1940s, Highlander supported union

organizing in the South through its educational and extension programs for union workers, but evolved in the 1950s to focusing on racial equality, providing a haven for civil rights organizing. Highlander was thus much more tied to social movements around the rights of workers and African Americans in the South than was the John C. Campbell School. Folksongs were taught and revised (such as “We Shall Overcome”) for the purpose of creating unity and lifting spirits on picket lines. Both Highlander and the John C. Campbell School are still in existence, with the Campbell School focusing on the teaching of traditional crafts, music, and dance, and Highlander Research and Education Center continues to work with grassroots leaders on a wide variety of social concerns.

Folk schools have never educated many people, in comparison to the standard schools for children, Grundtvig’s School of Death. As the movements—whether romantic nationalism or civil rights—with which folk schools were aligned have shifted, the purpose and meaning of folk schools have also changed, many becoming more technical and vocational, and others suffering from lack of interest and having to find a new purpose. However, they remain an important alternative for ways of educating for individual and collective transformation.

Cati Coe

See Also Romantic Nationalism.

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Folksong, Lyric

Traditional song type that “expresses” rather than “depicts” or “narrates.” A lyric folksong does not so much examine a situation by listing salient component parts (as catalog folksongs, often called just *songs*, do) or re-create an event by recounting the sequence of its stages from beginning, through middle, to end (as ballads do) as it expresses an emotional reaction to a significant experience. Religious lyric folksongs, for example, often look forward eagerly to the release from earthly travail that death will bring when the individual is finally united with the heavenly family in a joyful, eternal afterlife:

O when shall I see Jesus and dwell with him above; And from the flowing fountain drink everlasting love? When shall I be deliver'd from this vain world of sin? And with my blessed Jesus drink endless pleasures in?

In contrast, secular lyric songs more often look backward and lament rather than rejoice, as does this Irish emigration song from the nineteenth century that expresses grief at forced departure from a beloved native land:

The morning was bright, But my heart is now low, For far from those dear hills I'll soon have to go
Across the wide ocean, Forever to roam,
And leave far behind me The hills of Tyrone.
My poor heart is breaking With sorrow and pain
For friends and companions I'll ne'er see again.
I'm bidding farewell
To the friends I have known, And adieu to the wee lass
I leave in Tyrone.

However, religious lyric songs such as “O When Shall I See Jesus” that treat our relationship with a deity and even those secular lyric songs such as “Hills of Tyrone” that treat our relationship with social conditions, institutions, or habitations are in a distinct minority in British and American folksong repertoires, as they almost certainly are in other cultures as well. By far the most common kind of lyric folksong is that which treats interpersonal relationships with “significant others,” particularly male/female romantic entanglements. Indeed, such a topic is so dominant within the genre that many folklorists would consider “love song” virtually the equivalent of “lyric song”—or at the very least, definitive of the type.

As epitomized in love songs, the most striking feature of a lyric folksong (or just *lyric*) is the aforementioned quality of its appeal to affect. The lyric song is

more directly about the feelings it expresses—regret, longing, despair, ecstasy—than it is about a lengthy sea voyage to a new country or about a lover who, despite vows of fidelity, soon abandons one for another. These feelings are not so much *implied* by the topic as they *are* the topic, and they cluster around the two poles of joy and sorrow, often represented textually in images of life and death:

Come, all young maidens, take a warning from me
 Never build your nest
 on the top of the tree
 The roots they will wither, the branches decay
 Like that false-hearted young man, they will soon fade away.

Other features common to lyric songs seem to be logical extensions of the primary trait. For instance, lyric folksongs almost always adopt the first-person point of view, so that the circumstances, the worldview, and most prominently of course, the feelings are all offered from the perspective of the speaker himself or herself, as in this ancient Chinese example:

The meadow grasshopper chirps And the hillside grasshopper leaps. Until
 I have seen my lord,
 My anxious heart is disturbed. But as soon as I shall see him, As soon as
 I shall join him,
 My heart will have peace.
 I climb that southern hill There to gather the ferns. Until I have seen my
 lord, My anxious heart is tortured. But as soon as I shall see him, As soon
 as I shall join him, My heart will be gay.

A third characteristic is lack of concreteness. Lyric love songs in particular give almost no details of the journalistic sort, seldom specifying where or when circumstances to which the song alludes took place. Names of protagonists are invariably absent, as are specific identities—rich ladies from London, Turkish damsels, bold lieutenants. Medieval (or “Child”) ballads too are vague in detail but in a stylized, adumbrated way; lyric songs carry this trait to an extreme, so that details are not just stylized but generic and universal. Males are “young men,” females are “maidens,” place is a generalized outdoors, time is an implied spring or summer, and character and motives are predetermined. Even the circumstances that contributed to the condition lamented are but barely sketched since presumably they are typical and so already well known to all:

I once had a sweetheart but now I have none, And since he has left me
 I care for none;

And since he has left me, I'll have you all know That men are deceitful,
wherever they go.

A fourth characteristic of the lyric love song folklorists often stress in describing the type is its heavy employment of verbal formulas. This feature is found in all folklore that depends extensively on oral composition, acquisition, retention, and transmission, but it is, once again, especially prominent in the lyric. Thus, the Anglo-American folksinger has lamented in song after song that “if I had wings like an eagle I’d fly” or that “I wish, I wish, but I wish in vain / I wish I were a maid again,” and the African American blues singer has claimed over and over that he or she “woke up this morning feeling sad and blue / Woke up this morning, didn’t hardly know what to do.” Such set pieces have been called “floating stanzas” by some folksong scholars because they seem to fit comfortably into quite distinct songs.

A fifth trait is the lyric’s consistent employment of figurative imagery. Favored images are those of the natural environment: topographical features of the landscape, such as mountains and valleys; birds, such as larks, nightingales, and linnets; and a wide range of botanical phenomena, especially flowers—roses, for instance, or lilies. In other types of folksong, such natural imagery is basically just setting, but in lyric songs, nature enjoys a far more prominent role and far more semiotic significance:

I thrust my hand into some young bush Thinking there the sweetest flower
to find I pricked my finger to the bone
And left the sweetest flower alone.
I leaned my back up against some young oak Thinking it was a trusty tree
But first it bended and then it broke
And so my true love did to me.

Perhaps the most complex trait of lyric songs is their semantic structure, by which we mean the particular kind of relationships the essential images in the text bear to each other. In other genres of song, this structure is quite straightforward: In the ballad, for example, relationships are causal and sequential; in catalog songs—such as lullabies, work songs, ritual songs, and play songs—images are related by part/whole correspondences, by physical propinquity, or by some other shared empirical characteristic. In lyric song, however, the dominant relationship is what might be called thematic resonance; for example, there is clear association in the vitality of soaring birds, burning sun, frolicking lambs, or a girl running through meadows gathering flowers indiscriminately, as there is in the immobility of a dead lover, a marble tombstone, or a hushed cuckoo. These images can truly be called symbols; they signify such concepts as amplification, intensity, profusion, verticality, activity, and their opposites—silence, stillness, singleness, and so on—that cluster around

the two paradigmatic themes of life and death, with their associated emotions of joy and sorrow, as in this Russian example:

“Ah, why, little dove, are you sitting so unhappy So unhappy are you sitting and so sad?”
 “How can I, a little dove, be happy,
 Be happy and joyful?
 Last evening a pretty dove was with me,
 A pretty dove who sat by me,
 In the morning my dove lay slain,
 Lay slain, shot!”

Although enough songs in folk tradition exhibit the features here enumerated to gain them recognition as a type, none of the traits, not even the type's most essential ingredient—that it treats emotional effects of a significant experience—is necessarily restricted to lyric songs. Employment of an emotional perspective is only one way of representing and communicating about human affairs; recounting their evolution over time is another way, and anatomizing their constituent parts (the approach taken here in elucidating lyric song itself, for instance) is yet another. These three ways of articulating experience in sung verse are the most common in British and Anglo-American tradition, and any single song will invariably draw upon the conventions of more than one method. Thus, a narrative stanza or two will often appear in a lyric song, telling at least a bit of the lovers' original meeting, for instance, but ballads will frequently arrest the progress of their narratives to express affective response to the events so far recounted. Indeed, some songs may so vary from singer to singer that ballad stanzas may be dropped wholesale and lyric stanzas may be augmented—or the other way round—so that genetically related versions of the same song may be categorized differently, one as ballad, another as lyric. When we categorize any version of a song, then, whether as a lyric or as something else, we are saying only that it draws upon certain formal conventions more than on others.

Roger deV. Renwick

See Also Hymn, Folk; Music, Folk.

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Folksong, Narrative

A concept that assumes two things: first, that the item or complex in question is linked to the repertoire of a particular group (that is, it must have entered tradition at some level), and second, that its textual material is rooted in a sequence of past actions of dynamically involved characters, normally progressing through stages of stasis, disequilibrium, and resolution.

The recognition of narrative as a significant category of folksong has a long-standing history, dating in British scholarship to correspondence between Thomas Percy and the poet William Shenstone in the 1760s. On at least two occasions, Shenstone proposed a distinction between ballads, whose defining feature was action, and songs, which expressed emotion. To eighteenth-century neoclassicists, it made perfect sense to conscript two of Aristotle's divisions of poetry—epic and lyric—as frames for sung verse. It is perhaps more surprising that this literary generic construct remains accepted in today's more ethnographically oriented studies. Indeed, constituting genres solely on the basis of textual features may seem regressively item oriented, possibly obscuring relationships between songs within particular contexts and distorting our view of the cultural function of song. In some cases, however, ethnographic research reveals corresponding native distinctions: In Scotland, the concept of *muckle sang* corresponds generally to the notion of ballad, and in Newfoundland, a distinction between songs and ditties or, in some areas, between stories, songs, and ditties, embodies a separation of narrative and lyric. So the categories are not completely analytic, but as with any generic frame, they must not be adopted in a way that prioritizes one group or the other or in a way that fails to account for how the various categories interrelate in practice. Conversely, researchers should be alive to formal, thematic, and poetic differences within categories, as they too may contain clues for the interpretation of cultural processes.

An apposition between the narrative and the emotive, unfortunately, does not pave the way to a clear and easy means of classifying songs. With the broadening of the term *folksong* as an intellectual concept in the twentieth century, not only has the bipartite division proven insufficient but there also has been little progress toward the development of a system of classification that is both comprehensive and based on truly logical principles. Folklorists have expanded the literary model to include descriptive songs, which are purely expository and document certain aspects of a situation without weaving them into a story or presenting one's opinion of them one way or another. Moniker songs, which name and then briefly characterize members of a group, are good examples. But the model leaves little room for songs in which mode of expression is secondary to function, as, for example, in some work songs or in dance or game accompaniments. Further, beyond the difficulty of establishing suitable categories, there is the equally problematic question of deciding where a specific song might fit. If a moniker song characterizes

through action or dialogue, it is difficult to ignore the narrative component. Likewise, many nineteenth-century lyric songs contain at least the essence of a narrative, and often, the singer's attention is divided equally between telling a story and expressing his or her feelings about it. Further complications arise if one stops to ask what constitutes the song? Is it bounded solely by the text and melody? What other types of cultural and/or aesthetic information are applied in the interpretation of a song performance? Anna Caraveli's crucial revelation of "the song beyond the song" demonstrates that all sorts of satellite knowledge attaches itself to songs in particular situations. This can include oral narratives that explain or give grounds for a lyric evocation. Hugh Shields, writing of the predominantly lyric tradition in Gaelic Ireland, and Vladimir Propp, discussing lyric songs in Russia, have both noted the importance of an implied or assigned narrative to their respective materials. Even when narrative has little or no overt influence at the level of text, tradition nonetheless may hold it as an integral aspect of the song.

Bearing such difficulties in mind, we can say that as an intrinsic concept, narrative folksongs are oriented, at a textual level, toward the specific past actions of one or more characters and follow a conflict through to its resolution. In broad stroke, it includes everything from oral epics to *cante fable* (singing tale) and narrative obituary verse, though the most prevalent form in the recorded song traditions of western Europe and the Americas is the ballad, which consists of several subgenres: (1) the classical ballad, (2) the print-generated broadside ballad, (3) the native American ballad, and (4) the blues ballad. The underpinnings of these categories are complex and not always consistently applied, for they are founded on certain assumptions about context of production that do not coincide well with the repertoires either recovered from oral singers or assembled in the broadside collections of antiquarians. Formally, all ballads are stanzaic, except for some southern and eastern European traditions, which are stichic but molded by a strophic melody, and though specific forms differ, in Teutonic balladry (of which the Anglo-American tradition is a part), the most common is a quatrain of alternating tetrameter and trimeter lines, rhyming *abcb*. Where melody demands, this basic form can be rendered as a "double stanza" of four seven-stress lines rhyming *aabb*, a pattern common in broadsides. In terms of isolating subgenres, however, the key elements are differences in narrative method and poetic style, and the ethnographic validation of maintaining subgeneric divisions hinges on the assumption that each particular style is rooted in a specific set of cultural circumstances. For historical reasons, it makes sense to deal first with the classical and broadside varieties.

The classical ballad, on the basis of its thematic substance alone—its grounding in traditional belief systems, its emphasis on kinship, and its setting in a world that is at once aristocratic yet characteristically rural—suggests a cultural environment that is if not strictly medieval as some propose then at least premodern. Although there are manuscript texts in ballad form dating as far back as the thirteenth

Work Song

Songs used to pace work, not songs that happened to be sung while work was going on. Work songs were used in most of the world for such varied activities as making tweed (in the Hebrides), stamping barley (in ancient Greece), mashing grain (on Georgia Sea Islands), rowing boats (in the Caribbean), and felling and cutting trees, hoeing ground, picking cotton, and cutting sugarcane (on plantations and in prisons in the southern United States). Political prisoners forced to crush rocks in South Africa prison quarries often sang work songs. And in much of West Africa, songs were used for almost every kind of physical work.

Work songs helped workers in communal tasks apply maximum power at appropriate moments in the work cycle (railroad gangs lining track, sailors turning winches and pulling lines, oarsmen rowing boats). They timed individual body movements in activities in which body position was critical for worker safety (roustabouts on the Mississippi River and Chesapeake Bay docks used songs to time their steps on swaying gangplanks to avoid being swung off into the water; African American convicts in Southern prisons used songs to avoid hitting one another with their axes while felling large trees). The songs also provided emotional outlets for workers in oppressive situations (African American slaves and convicts could often sing things about their situation they could not say in ordinary speech).

Where work songs survive, their aesthetics are keyed to participation rather than performance. In group songs with a leader, the ability to keep the beat going and to be heard matters more than a nice voice or wide tonal range. In Southern prisons, for example, tenors were more valued as group leaders than singers in any other vocal range because their voices were more likely to be heard over a large work area. Work songs are occasionally accompanied by musical instruments (on some boats, for example, drummers paced rowers), but instrumentation is most often provided by the work itself: by field-workers' axes or hoes, railroad workers' mauls, or stampers' feet.

Except for remote areas where group work is still done manually, the work song is a disappearing genre. Ships are loaded by crane operators in rooms 200 feet from the sealed containers being moved, large trees are felled by individuals wielding chainsaws, hard ground is turned by diesel-powered diskers, and cotton is picked by machine. The last place in North America where work songs survived as a viable tradition was in Southern agricultural prisons because many of those institutions maintained, until the 1960s and 1970s, the racially segregated and physically brutal culture of the nineteenth-century plantation.

Bruce Jackson

century, it does not logically follow that all ballads are medieval, as was the tacit assumption in earlier scholarship. Contemporary approaches urge that ballads be treated as coterminous with the lives of the singers, even if chivalric themes suggest a more antiquated setting and despite purported links with such late-medieval literary genres as metrical romance. Within this framework, the cultural trait overarching classical ballad style is orality, that is, the genre appears to emanate from

nonliterate culture. Emphasis on orality avoids grounding the ballad in a specific historical era, linking it instead to a cultural condition extant in at least parts of Europe and America until well into the nineteenth century. Stylistically, the oral nature of the classical ballad is evidenced by formulaic diction and stanzaic sequencing based on repetition and chiasitic structuring, resulting in a condensed, “gapped” method of narration often described as “leaping and lingering.” Other conventionally cited narrative traits—concentration on a single narrative episode, dramatic development through dialogue and action, and impersonal or objective tone—are not of themselves markers of orality, but they do echo Axel Olrik’s Epic Law of Single-Stranded Plot and his insistence that, in oral narrative, action is everything. They also highlight the degree to which the story takes center stage in the classical ballad, leaving most other common features of narration—description, characterization, and evaluation—to be inferred subtextually.

The broadside ballads, printed on single sheets of paper and hawked in the streets and at fairs, developed with the rapid expansion of cheap, popular literature in the wake of the invention of the printing press (in 1454). The earliest broadside poetry mimicked elite forms of the day, but by the mid-sixteenth century, the ballad form had become a common medium for broadside writers, probably due to its popularity among the reading public. Formally and to a lesser extent thematically, the broadsides and the classical ballads share common ground, but the former’s literary provenance shows stylistically in a greater emphasis on description, idiosyncratic language, and linear structure. Where formulas appear, they are conventional rather than intrinsic, found, for example, as convenient opening or closing stanzas, not as part of a totalizing poetic language. Natascha Würzbach has argued that the most prevalent broadside commonplaces are the “come-all-ye” formulas directing the audience’s attention to the singer/seller, thus highlighting the commercial basis of the genre.

The subject matter of the broadsides also tends to grab one’s attention in very obvious ways; in fact the comparison between broadsides and contemporary tabloids has been made often. The early “black letter” ballads, so-called because of their gothic typeface, revel in bawdy tales, rustic humor, and accounts of the fantastic, as well as in political and religious issues. By the late eighteenth century, by which time roman “white letter” type replaces black letter, crime and punishment become the mainstays of the trade, coupled with a tendency for romantic narratives to emphasize class difference and emigration as the greatest obstacles to a happy union, such that tales of love are played out in response to emergent social pressures of the times. Thus, the broadsides, in contrast to the classical ballads, are fundamentally modern and urban, resulting in shifts not only in theme but also in attitude. First, they are rational, depicting a world much more in line with the empirical surroundings of the singers and their audience. The supernatural occupies only a very small place in broadside narratives, and otherworld figures tend to be

Reproduction of a woodcut from a Pepysian garland of black letter broadside ballad "The Famous Rat Catcher," ca. 1615. (Library of Congress)



1 **T**Here was a rare Rat-catcher,
 Did about the Country wander,
 The soundest blade of all his trade,
 Or I should him deeply slander:
*For still would he cry, a Ratt tat tat¹,
 tara rat, euer:
 To catch a Mouse, or to carouse,
 such a Ratter I saw neuer.*

confined to those sanctioned, however equivocally, within modern ideology, mainly ghosts and the sacred. For the most part, the marvelous in broadsides consists of natural curiosities that challenge credulity rather than reinforce belief, and one might even allow that its components include extraordinary social roles filled by human characters, such as warrior women and laborer heroes who achieve dramatic rises in wealth and class standing. Second, the broadsides are more subjective than classical ballads, often stating the moral to be drawn from the narrative through conventionalized warnings to the audience. This, coupled with frequent metanarration and asides to the audience, gives the narrator's voice a dynamic presence in the text, and it is not uncommon for the narrator to appear as a character, either as a witness to the events or even as the protagonist.

These generic descriptions and distinctions, however, must be accepted in the abstract, for even though any number of texts can be put forward as representative of one subgenre or another, attempts to construct concrete boundaries are destined to fail. As stated at the outset, the division assumes particular styles emanating from particular cultural contexts, leaving to one side the fact that individual items are highly capable of flourishing outside their matrices. To approach the topic diachronically, a concomitant distinction between oral versus literate, vis-à-vis context of production, and oral versus print (or recording), vis-à-vis medium of transmission, is essential, for in reality, the classical and broadside ballads constitute parallel traditions that existed in immediate proximity for almost four centuries; traces of interchange and mutual influence are extensive. Broadside have been disseminated widely through oral transmission, and several "oral" ballads

owe at least part of their circulation to print. Where such exchanges occur, it has been widely demonstrated that songs can become shaped by the aesthetic conventions of the adopted milieu. Emendations to classical ballad stories reworked for the broadside press commonly include the addition of descriptive detail, nonformulaic language, subjective interpolation by the narrator, and other typically broadside traits. Similar processes are operative in oral transmission in later stages of tradition, as, for example, the tendency toward the lyrification of classical ballads in the nineteenth century, noted by Tristram Coffin.

Coping with the sheer dynamism of tradition has proven the greatest obstacle to a clear definition of balladry at any level or in any form, which, coupled with the divergent intellectual and cultural interests of those who have studied the form, has meant that virtually all efforts toward ballad classification and analysis have been open to challenge. Understanding something of the history of the scholarship may at least put some of the debate in perspective, even if it resolves nothing completely. Much of the early antiquarian writing probably was based on a familiarity with the urban broadsides, as is evidenced by the general adoption of the term *ballad*, or *ballet* as it was frequently spelled, which in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries normally indicated a song printed or written on a sheet of paper. Ongoing antiquarian research, particularly in the wake of Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), led to the "discovery" of the traditional (classical) ballad, then still common in rural areas of Britain, especially in northern England and lowland Scotland. Subsequent collectors, influenced by national-romantic conceptions of *das Volk*, became increasingly drawn to the ballad as folk poetry, and by the time William Motherwell collected in the 1820s, there was at least an intuitive understanding of the difference between the classical and broadside forms. During roughly the same period, the Grimms formulated their notion of *das Volke dichtet* to account for the esoteric features stamped on the products of oral tradition.

The central figure of late nineteenth-century Anglo-Scots ballad studies was Harvard professor Francis James Child, whose monumental anthology *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* appeared between 1882 and 1898. Years earlier, his curiosity about the nature of ballads had been piqued while preparing an edition for a general series on British poets, and in subsequent research, conducted in collaboration with the Danish folklorist Svend Grundtvig, he attempted to concentrate solely on the traditional form, which he termed "popular." What he could not ignore, of course, was the degree of mutual exchange between the popular and the "vulgar" (broadside) forms, and he often gave the nod to print material that possibly had traditional roots or parallels. It is also quite possible that he was unable to break completely free of the antiquarians, who had derived their understanding of the ballads largely from broadsides. Several of the most famous ballad types—"The Chevy Chase" and much of the Robin Hood material, for example—existed only in versions that displayed greater stylistic affinity with the broadside than

with the oral form. Unfortunately, Child died before writing the essay explaining the process that guided his specific choices, and in the absence of this statement, the collection was left to speak for itself.

Where Child's erudition carried the voice of authority, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* stood as a five-volume definition of *the* ballad, and more ardent disciples granted traditional status only to versions of Child ballads. Broadside were regarded as, at best, poor cousins, and those that Child himself included were assumed coarse vestiges of once pristine traditional compositions. Critics, on the other hand, insisted that the collection be taken at face value, and because of the multiformity of its content, they argued that a distinction between broadside and traditional forms was if not arbitrary then virtually impossible to define, concluding, as Thelma James did, that a Child ballad was little more than a ballad selected and anthologized by Child. This position became increasingly tenable in light of renewed song collection, which revealed traditions in which classical ballads mingled freely with broadsides and singers who rarely made any palpable distinction between them. Even though most song collections deferred to the influence of Child by placing classical ballads first, a practice D. K. Wilgus criticized as constituting a "Child and other" approach, the bulk of the narrative material in tradition in the twentieth century consisted of either broadside versions or the two other forms of modern balladry—the so-called native American ballad and the "blues" ballad.

The native American ballad (NAB) is very closely related to the broadside; many types within this subgenre are, in fact, products of the American broadside trade and are, at times, stylistically indistinguishable from British broadsides. As a subgenre in its own right, however, the NAB brings to the fore three elements that either are not apparent or exist as secondary considerations in the print ballads: (1) a concern for occupation, (2) journalistic style, and (3) in contrast to the ribaldry and moralization of the broadsides, a focus on puritanism, sentimentalism, and an often fatalistic resignation to the hand of providence. It should be pointed out that none of these characteristics makes the NAB a distinctly American form, for contemporaneous songs in Europe—Scottish bothy ballads, Norwegian *rallarviser*, Irish street ballads, and even many Victorian broadsides—reveal similar influences, which highlights one problem in discussing this form—the inadequacy of the term that defines it. Moreover, the current understanding of the NAB tends to exclude non-English-American parallels, such as the Mexican/Chicano *corrido* in the Southwest and the francophone *complaintes* in Canada. Proposing a term that successfully encompasses all these traditions is no easy task, but it is possible to account briefly for some of the features common to many, if not all, of them. The style appears to be a logical evolution of the broadsides, conditioned by a number of social developments of the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. The concern for occupation can be correlated to the transition from petty production to industrial labor as the basis of rural working-class economy, particularly in resource-based industries (such as

mining, lumbering, offshore fishing, transportation industries, and others) with which the NAB is so strongly associated. Details of occupational life and work technique receive a great deal of attention, and many narratives are set against a background of harsh working conditions, especially in inherently dangerous trades. Employer/worker relations are a prevalent theme, though they are not always expressed antagonistically; if social differences between worker and boss are not immediately relevant to the narrative, they are likely to be ignored.

The late nineteenth century marks the first period in history in which literacy rates in Western, industrialized countries approached the 100 percent level, and in addition to the varieties of chap literature purchased for entertainment, one of the more prevalent sources of reading material was the newspaper. It is therefore not surprising that ballads of the time should exhibit journalistic influences, among them a pronounced concern for details relating to time and place, an increased tendency toward reportage as opposed to dramatic narration, and a notable reliance on actual events, especially murders and disasters, for subject matter. Anne B. Cohen's study of the journalistic and balladic responses to the murder of Pearl Bryan in 1896 shows clearly the ballad's reliance on news reports not only for specific details but also for viewpoints and thematic formulas. Journalism, as a prominent arbiter of Victorian ethos, may also account to some degree for the puritanical and sentimental quality of the NAB, though there are likely other influences operating here, including religious and temperance movements and the rapidly expanding popular music industry, all of which relied heavily on sentimental and moralistic material to attract audiences. From a stylistic perspective, one of the main outgrowths of the infusion of sentiment is a drift away from the focus on a single episode toward a presentation not only of the event itself but also of its reverberations. A narrative of disaster will generally move quickly past the scene of the tragedy to its impact on relatives, giving full vent to their grief and the uncertainty of their future.

The blues ballad, although its name suggests a strictly Afro-American form, has been shown by D. K. Wilgus to constitute a syncretism of black and Irish traditions, one of a number of prominent nineteenth-century forms resulting from this particular cultural fusion. Thematically, though it responds to many of the same occupational impulses as the NAB, focusing on the worker or strong man as modern hero, it deals bluntly and at times sardonically with the topics of crime, violence, and sex. Its protagonists are commonly antiheroes and almost never passive. Perhaps its most notable feature is the degree to which it emphasizes character over narrative sequence, maintaining as the primary objective the praise or satirization of its human subject. Like the NAB, much of its subject matter derives ostensibly from actual events, but rather than re-create the narrative in verse, the blues ballad assumes the audience's familiarity with the details of the incident and offers instead brief, highly formulaic, and often stylized allusions to events and character reactions, generally weaving a pastiche of commentary around an implied

narrative; it leaps but rarely lingers. In addition to textual features, a crucial element of blues ballad style is the accompaniment, provided by guitar or banjo, that, as in the blues proper, acts as an independent voice within the song, providing a textural response to the vocal line and, through the placement of instrumental breaks, structures groups of stanza into thematically connected units.

To varying degrees, collectors and analysts in the twentieth century have been confronted with all the styles simultaneously, and no ethnographically sound study of modern tradition should regard them as discrete but should explore their many interconnections in all their richness. Nor will such a study find that the interrelationships fall neatly into a historical model, with one form evolving into another. If the stanzaic form of the classical ballad turns up in the blues ballad, it is equally true that the instrumental component of the blues ballad, by virtue of its broad influence on contemporary popular music, has ultimately shaped the performance of classical ballads in the folksong revival. From an ethnohistorical perspective, however, individual styles can remain the subject of focused analyses. The development of the oral-formulaic theory and other approaches to the study of formulaic poetry have reawakened scholarly interest in the classical ballad, which remains the most broadly documented example of oral literature in anglophone culture and offers great potential for research into our preliterate past. Likewise, a number of recent works have examined the broadside as a dominant form of early popular culture. Regardless of perspective, the study of both theme and style in narrative folksong can contribute to the understanding of tradition, for there is as much to learn from the way a story is told as from the tale itself.

James Moreira

See Also Ballad; Broadside Ballad; Epic Laws; Music, Folk; Oral-Formulaic Theory.

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Folktale

A traditional narrative; more narrowly, a traditional fictional story in prose. Fictional folktales, told as entertainment, can be distinguished from myths and legends, which are intended to convey information or at least a point of view. Even fictional folktales, however, educate by illustrating or explaining particular cultural ideas and especially by cautioning against undesirable behavior. *Traditional* means handed down or passed on; traditionality is most obvious in folktales that are manifested in many more or less different versions (or variants). The tale types most common in Europe, the Middle East, and India are listed in *The Types of the Folktale*, an index introduced in 1910 by Antti Aarne and enlarged twice (in 1928 and 1961) by Stith Thompson. Each tale type is assigned a number designated by AT (in honor of the compilers) or Type.

The shortest and most numerous tales are the *humorous anecdotes* (AT 1200–1874), most of which deal with cleverness, stupidity, or both. As with jokes, these anecdotes often use stereotypes to ridicule broad classes of people: numskulls, con artists and their dupes, unfaithful and otherwise disagreeable spouses, or ungodly parsons. The subjects of some of these anecdotes, many of which were found in early written sources, are now archaic, but others remain current in oral tradition. Of course, numerous anecdotes exist that have not been indexed. Gershon Legman's work compensates for the habitual scholarly neglect of erotic material.

Animal tales (AT 1–299) are much like anecdotes in that they tell of tricksters and their victims. These tales, which are generally satirical, are popular throughout

Variant

The concrete realization of an abstract structural unit or an entity—for example, a tale, ballad, or proverb type. The famous tale about Cupid and Psyche presented in the novel *Metamorphoses* (The Golden Ass) by Apuleius (b. ca. 125 CE) is an early variant of the tale type ‘The Mysterious Being (Monster, Animal) as Bridegroom’; this tale type was defined by Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson as the type number 425 A.

Some scholars consider variant and version synonymous. Others, however, recommend the use of the term version because variant is so strongly associated with the old typological and comparative text analysis—the historic-geographic method. If the terms are used together, variant may refer to those versions that differ appreciably from the most common, ‘typical’ forms.

Variants can be compared and categorized; it is up to the scholar to decide whether those variants of a tale type closely resembling each other make up a subtype (or redaction or oikotype).

Satu Apo

the world, but in different cultures, they tend to follow different patterns. The animals talk and act like humans, and some of the tales correspond exactly to anecdotes with human agents. For example, in AT 43, “The Bear Builds a House of Wood, the Fox, of Ice,” corresponds to AT 1097, “The Ice Mill”; AT 153, “The Gelding of the Bear and the Fetching of Salve,” corresponds to AT 1133, “Making the Ogre Strong (by Castration).” Many other animal tales duplicate or reflect on motifs in human-populated tales. For example, in AT 50, “The Sick Lion,” and AT 91, “Monkey Who Left His Heart at Home,” victims are to be sacrificed for the alleged curative properties of parts of their bodies, just as in human-populated tales, a diseased character hopes or pretends to hope to be cured at the expense of a sacrificial victim. Animal judges mock corrupt and foolish human judges. Animal tales make use of stock characters, and different animals assume some of the same roles: the fox, the jackal, the monkey, or the coyote is clever, as are the rabbit and the hare; the bear, the wolf, or even the human is stupid. Other objects, even inanimate ones, occasionally appear as folktale characters. In an African tale that was carried to the New World, one or two people are terrified by objects and animals that speak (Motif B210.1).

Tall tales (tales of lying, AT 1875–1999) are anecdotes that begin realistically but culminate in the incredible. When they are performed, the narrator takes the role of the con artist, and the audience becomes the dupe. Tall tales, especially about hunting and farming, have flourished in the New World in response to its promise of abundance. *Formula tales* (AT 2000–2399), which rely on a firm structure, are similar to formulaic prayers. Some of these tales, evidently honed on audiences of young children, are silly; others explore sacred subjects. This affinity



Illustration from the Jewish folk tale “The Fox and the Raven,” illustration by Beatrice Hirschfeld 1917. In the tale, the fox outsmarts the raven to get the raven’s meal. (Friedlander, Gerald, ed. *Jewish Fairy Stories*, 1917)

Motifeme

The highly abstract unit of a narrative plot. In the structural analyses of folktales by Alan Dundes, the abstract units of actions or states are designated *motifemes* and their manifestations are *motifs*. The different realizations of a given motifeme are called *allomotifs*. The motifeme ‘Lack’, for example, is realized in the North American tales as the motifs ‘Once there was no earth,’ ‘Water was where earth is now,’ and ‘A long time ago there was no sun.’ Allomotifs—also abstractions—would be, for example, ‘Earth is missing’ and ‘Sun is missing.’

In Dundes’s model, the relationships between an invariant unit and its variants are the same as the relationships between phoneme, phone, and allophone or morpheme, morph, and allomorph in linguistic analysis.

Dundes abstracted several motifemes from North American tales. The units appear interconnected, as pairs and ‘patterns.’ One of these patterns is Lack (L) + Lack liquidated (LL); the lack of earth is liquidated in Indian myths, for example, by bringing up mud from the bottom of the primordial sea. Because a lack is sometimes fulfilled through the act of cheating, the motifemes Deceit + Deception can be added to the basic pattern L + LL. Another common scheme consists of the motifemes Interdiction + Violation + Consequence + Attempted Escape. Motifeme sequences may combine to form more complex plots.

Satu Apo

of the sacred and the profane is expressed overtly in a tale in which a man, reproved for playing cards, assigns to each a symbolic, religious significance (AT 1613, “Playing-Cards Are My Calendar and Prayerbook”). *Cumulative tales*, such as “The House That Jack Built” (AT 2035), add one phrase at a time and require the narrator to rattle off a series of events, often in reverse order. In an *endless tale*, numerous sheep have to cross a bridge or ants have to move a heap of sand; a *round* (AT 2320) is a story that ends where it began and then begins again.

Some folktales depend on the response of an audience. *Dilemma tales*, which are popular in Africa, involve the audience in a particularly important role: The story sets up a situation with no easy answer, such as one in which various characters must share an indivisible reward, and the audience discusses the merits of the possible solutions (e.g., AT 653, 945 II). In *catch tales* (AT 2200–2205), also called *hoax stories*, the audience is asked what it thinks will happen next, and it responds with a well-known folktale convention (“The lost object is in the fish’s stomach” [Motif N2 11.1], “The attic is full of horrors”). But in the end, all is mundane (the fish’s stomach contains only guts).

Tales with divine characters, such as God, Jesus, St. Peter, or an angel, are grouped together (AT 750–849). These naturally tend to be didactic, but even here, some are humorous. Tales composed of more than a single episode are called *complex*. The best-known complex folktales are those with magical motifs (AT 300–749). Realistic complex tales are called *novellas* or *novelle* (AT 850–999). Many depict cleverness and wisdom: A clever hero wins the hand of the princess, a clever woman proves herself worthy of her husband, or a wise peasant out-riddles the king. Sage advice leads either to success or, just as often, to disaster. Some novelle describe social and marital problems: A poor peasant obtains the property of the rich man; an innocent woman suffers unjustly; a haughty wife is reformed. Others testify to the inevitability of fate.

Traditional tales and episodes are combined in various ways. Many complex tale types are composed of a string of episodes that relate to a particular theme, such as persecution, separation, or heroism. Animal tales and humorous anecdotes are sometimes joined together on the basis of a similar cast of characters: the fox and the wolf or the rogue and the dupe. Such combinations can become traditional. Other humorous complex tales consist of a frame into which various short tales are set: for example, “The Bargain Not to Become Angry,” AT 1000; “The Husband Hunts Three Persons as Stupid as His Wife,” AT 1384; and “Clever Elsie,” AT 1450. Frame tales are also noteworthy features that lend unity to several literary collections of folktales: the pilgrimage in Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*; the house party in Straparola’s *Pleasant Nights*; the storytelling session set into a magic tale (a version of “The Needle Prince,” AT 437) in Basile’s *Pentamerone*; Shahrazad in *The Thousand and One Nights*. Modern literary authors, balancing a need for realism with a desire to tell a good story, occasionally employ embedded narrative, establishing a

situation in which a character narrates a folktale. The same device, which distances the author from the tale, has been used in films (e.g., *Dead of Night* [1945]).

The categories that Aarne devised for *The Types of the Folktale* represent qualities that are not exclusive to the tales listed for each. For example, the clever cat in “Puss in Boots” (AT 545B) is a close relative of the clever fox in animal tales. Many tales not classed as formula tales depend on accumulations of events. The hero meets a series of strong men with special abilities, all of whom, usually in order, help with the quest or task (“The Helpers,” AT 533), or traveling companions learn a few words of a new language that, recited in order, convict them of a crime they did not commit (“We Three, for Money,” AT 1697). Magic tales can include religious motifs: The foster parent in “Our Lady’s Child” (AT 710) can be either a religious character (the Virgin Mary), a demonic woman, or a male ghoul.

Humor is not confined to anecdotes but is important in both magic tales and novelle. In several tale types, in which the hero must make the melancholy princess laugh or speak, the audience too will be amused (AT 559, 571–574, 945). In “The Rabbit Herd,” AT 570, and in “The Birthmarks of the Princess,” AT 850, members of the royal family put themselves in compromising positions in an effort to obtain some special object from the hero, and then they have to give him whatever he wants to prevent him from broadcasting what they did. The humor of “The Hero Catches the Princess with Her Own Words,” AT 853, comes from conversational double entendre.

Puns and verbal misunderstandings are common sources of folktale humor. Often, a misunderstood statement leads to surprising success (AT 1641, “Doctor Know-All”; AT 1563, “Both?”). Other misunderstandings are unfortunate. A fool, thinking that a messenger has come from heaven, gives the messenger valuables to take to a dead relative (AT 1540, “The Student from Paradise”), or another fool gives away the family savings, earmarked for “Hard Times,” to someone who claims to be just that (AT 1541, “The Long Winter”). Anecdotes about the misunderstandings of deaf people (AT 1698) are very much current in oral tradition, as are dialect stories that make fun of heavily accented speech.

The Types of the Folktale is intended to be a finding list (an index), not a logical classification. However, Aarne’s arrangement corresponds in a general way to the noteworthy aspects of the tales: animal or supernatural characters, magic objects, wise answers, and so forth. In many cases, the purpose of a tale seems to be to permit the expression of a particular, interesting episode or motif. Rhymes or songs are also memorable features that help to stabilize tales: Any reader of the Grimms’ collection recognizes “mirror, mirror, on the wall” and “flounder, flounder in the sea.” The complaints of murdered or transformed souls are often versified (AT 403, 720, 780), as are riddles (AT 851, 927) and warnings (AT 955, 1360C). Prose tales interspersed with songs or rhymes, called *cante fables*, are known from Indian, Arabian, Persian, and medieval European literary traditions.

Cross-references in *The Types of the Folktale* show that, although by definition each is supposed to stand for an independent tale, some tale types are not entirely separate from each other. In several cases, a single number covers separate tales. For example, “The Ungrateful Serpent Returned to Captivity” (AT 155) includes the tale summarized there, in which the villain is tricked back into a trap, a longer form in which a series of judges initially condemns the man for his own ingratitude, and also an Aesopic fable in which the snake bites the man and the man dies. The references to “The Ghoulish Schoolmaster and the Stone of Pity,” AT 894, contain three separate tale types, all of which end with the same episode with the stone that swells in sympathy. Tale types that share their contents are said to belong to the same cycle of tales or to have an affinity for each other. There is, for example, a cycle of magic tales and novelle in which a villain makes away with the heroine’s newborn child and another of stories with cruel stepmothers. Gordon Hall Gerould observed that initially separate tales join together because they share a “point of contact.” The references, summaries, and divisions between tale types in *The Types of the Folktale* represent the tales from northern Europe better than they do those from the south. To defend against this bias, confirmation can be sought in such sources as R. M. Dawkins’s study of Greek tales and Aurelio Espinosa’s Spanish tale collection.

As much as we would like everything to be neatly organized, folktales have too many dimensions to permit them to be classified to everyone’s satisfaction. This is true even of the definition of the folktale. The same story can be told in different genres—for example, as a legend and a fictional folktale, a folktale and a ballad (“The Singing Bone,” AT 780; “The King and the Abbot,” AT 922), a folktale and a myth, or a folktale and a riddle (“The Princess Who Cannot Solve the Riddle,” AT 851; “Out-Riddling the Judge,” AT 927). In such a case, the genre naturally affects the form of the story. And if a tale is known in two forms, in different genres or even as different subtypes within the same genre, these are likely to affect each other. Legends are turned into magic tales when their aesthetic impact outweighs their belief component (“The Juniper Tree,” AT 720; “The Girl as Flower,” AT 407). Novelle and anecdotes have long been incorporated into plays (e.g., Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew*, AT 901). Dramatic productions also have suggested or reinforced characters and scenes for folktales. An impostor disguised as a doctor or other learned man (Motifs K1825, K1955–1956) is such a figure, as is the commonplace farcical situation of illicit lovers who are threatened with discovery.

Some of the tales or components of tales found in Europe and the Middle East also are known in other parts of the world, but the European-centered tale type index is unsuitable for global research. Nevertheless, there are both motifs and whole folktales that are found throughout great regions. In order to facilitate access to all traditional literature, Stith Thompson created *The Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*. Complete tales are identifiable through the numbered motifs

that refer to incidents. Some of these are known, as independent tales or as components of longer tales, throughout most of the world.

One ubiquitous episode is the “Obstacle flight” (Motif D672), in which objects thrown to hinder pursuit grow into obstacles: a twig into a forest, a stone into a mountain, or a flask of water into a lake. In Europe and Asia Minor, this motif appears sporadically in several different magic tales and regularly in AT 313, “The Girl as Helper in the Hero’s Flight.” The oldest example of the “Obstacle flight” motif comes from eighth-century Japan in a myth about an escape from the land of the dead. The motif is also known in Polynesia and Africa. In the Americas, it has come from prehistoric Asia and, more recently, from Europe. There is an analogous episode of a “Transformation flight” (Motif D67 1), in which the fugitives disguise themselves in other forms, such as a church and a priest or a lake and a duck. In the ancient Greek story of Jason and the Argonauts, objects are thrown to hinder pursuit, with no transformations (Motif R23 1, “Obstacle flight—Atalanta type”): Medea scatters pieces of the dismembered body of her brother, which her father, who is pursuing her ship, stops to gather.

Another such episode is the “Mysterious housekeeper” (Motif N83 1.1), in which a woman emerges, unobserved, from an object (such as an animal or a chip of wood) and secretly does the housework. The fortunate resident, puzzled, hides and spies to see what is happening and then disenchants the housekeeper. This is part of AT 408, “The Three Oranges,” in the Middle East, Europe, and India, and is an independent tale or a part of other tales in Africa, Southeast Asia, China, and the Americas.

“The disguised flayer” (Motif K1941) is also widespread. The idea of putting on a skin disguise may not be distinctive enough to warrant being called a tale type, but, in places as far apart as northern Africa (Berber), Madagascar, Japan, and (native) America, this happens just after a particular scene in which a character discovers someone hiding in a tree that hangs over a well, and one of them kills the other. Widespread, presumably ancient episodes such as these can be found by looking for large blocks of references in the *Motif-Index*.

In addition to motifs and episodes, there are other characteristics of folktales that warrant cross-cultural investigation. A significant part of folktale humor is not bound to any single culture: Paul Radin noticed qualities of the trickster (which he identified in the tales of the Winnebago Indians) in clowns and in Punch-and-Judy shows, both of which come from *commedia dell’arte* tradition. Quests, too, are universal—this common pattern in hero tales and myths has long been recognized. Other patterns that describe other broad genres of tales—for example, stories in which the protagonist is a victim of persecution—can be identified. Oral-formulaic theory is investigating, among other things, the idea that there are general principles such as those expressed in Axel Olrik’s Epic Laws of Folk Narrative. Poetic devices such as contrast and exaggeration are common in folktales. Rhythmic

properties, not only repetition and replication but also framing, anticipation, and recapitulation, are quite general. People use narrative to give form to both real and imaginary events, and folktales are an important source of material that shows how this happens.

Thompson developed his expertise at motif classification using material from Native Americans and Europeans. Folktales from other continents were not so well indexed. Fortunately, since the motif index was last revised in six volumes (1955–1958), a considerable amount of additional narrative material from underrepresented regions has been published and indexed. The South American collections of Johannes Wilbert and Karen Simoneau are indexed with motif numbers, and several indexes are now available for Africa. Recent indexes in the Folklore Fellows Communications series include Lee Haring's for Madagascar (FFC 231, 1982), Nai-tung Ting's for China (FFC 223, 1978), Hiroko Ikeda's for Japan (FFC 209, 1971), and Patricia Waterman's for aboriginal Australia (FFC 238, 1987).

Genres of narrative defined according to European concepts are not always generalizable, for example, in Asia, Africa, Australia, and the Americas, there are mythical folktales, cosmogony used for entertainment. Two such examples are "Snaring the sun" (Motif A728), in which the sun is caught with ropes, and the "Earth diver" (Motif A812), in which, when the world is flooded, an animal brings some earth to the surface and thus creates the land. Certain tales have been shown to have migrated from Asia to (prehistoric) America or from Africa to the Americas. This latter migration is recent enough that tales of the same type can be identified with certainty.

Although they also can be dramatized or written, folktales are most often manifested as oral performances. Almost anyone who can understand the simplest folktales can narrate those, but elaborate stories require special expertise to be told properly (that is, not just as a summary). Accomplished narrators are able to animate a bald plot, turning it into a fascinating story. They can add to and delete from traditional tales, but, in Europe at least, the continuation of the same tale types proves that narrators are often happy to retell the same old story. Depending on social expectations and the personality of the individual narrator, folktale performance can be understated or highly dramatic (see Performance). Dialogues between the characters alternate with descriptive passages. Like the product of any traditional artist, a version of a folktale belongs both to tradition and to its narrator. Occasionally, a narrator creates a new tale from traditional structures and motifs. It has sometimes been difficult to separate traditional tales (folktales) from idiosyncratic, individual tales, especially outside of Europe, but as more and better indexes have become available, it becomes easier to identify traditional elements.

The apt term *Homo narrans* was coined by Kurt Ranke to remind us how peculiarly human is the ability to tell stories. Tale telling is undoubtedly as old as humankind, and written examples of folktales begin early. The oldest magic

tale, “The Two Brothers or Bata and Anubis,” from ancient Egypt (1250 BCE), is described as a composite of AT 302B, 318, 516B, and 870C*. There are Sumerian fables, with the usual characters such as the fox, the wolf, the sheep, and the dog, from the sixth century BCE, and the Gilgamesh epic, which is Sumerian and Babylonian, contains a number of important folktale motifs. Stories of the Assyrian sage Achikar (ca. 420 BCE) come from the same mold as do modern wisdom tales. Written folktales from ancient times seldom are the same as later complex tales, but simple tales are easily recognizable as identical to modern ones. Odysseus’s blinding of the Cyclops (in book 9 of *The Odyssey*) is now told as an oral tale (AT 1137), as is the idea that a sailor should walk inland until no one recognizes his oar (in book 11). Apuleius’s *Metamorphoses* (also called *The Golden Ass*, from the second century CE), contains several witch legends and the earliest version of a magic tale corresponding to a complete modern tale type (“Cupid and Psyche,” AT 425B). The tradition of Aesopic fables has long been both oral and written; in addition to Greek and Roman texts, there are fables in the Sanskrit *Pañchatantra* (before 500 CE). The beast epics (Reynard the Fox) of the Middle Ages reveal the satirical potential of animal tales.

Another Eastern source of early tales, in addition to the *Pañchatantra*, are the *Jatakas*, describing the former lives of the Buddha, which are replete with magical transformations. Some of these motifs and tales exist in oral tradition—for example, one in which a self-sacrificing hare, who immolated himself to feed a beggar, is sent to the moon, where he can still be seen (no. 316; compare Motif A751.2, “Man in the moon a rabbit”). An eleventh-century Indian collection, Somadeva’s



Odysseus and his companions gouge out the eye of the Cyclops Polyphemus, illustration from an antique Greek vase, 1887. (Archives Charmet/The Bridgeman Art Library International)

Ocean of the Streams of Story, is an early source for many of the motifs in European magic tales. The *Arabian Nights* was first published in French as *Mille et une Nuit* (1703–1713), but part of it is as old as the ninth century; it includes tales from Persia (tenth century), from Baghdad (tenth and twelfth centuries), and from Egypt (eleventh to fourteenth centuries), as well as contemporary material.

Anecdotes and novelle are present in the works of Boccaccio and Chaucer (fourteenth century). Collections of humorous anecdotes were made in Germany, beginning in the thirteenth century and continuing, there and elsewhere in Europe, through the eighteenth century. There are anecdotes, magic tales, and novelle in Straparola's *Pleasant Nights* (1550–1553) and magic tales in Basile's *Pentamerone* (1634–1636). Collections of fairy tales were popular in France in the eighteenth century. In contrast to the Enlightenment belief in the superior virtue of reason, magic tales represent fantasy. Beginning in the 1760s, folktales were the basis of dramatic entertainments, homely subjects chosen for their contrast with the pretentious ones favored by aristocratic culture. Spectacular entertainments (films, musicals, operas, puppet shows, and British Christmas pantomimes) continue to employ folktale plots in this manner.

In the modern world of mass culture, anecdotes are still oral, but longer folktales are more often printed or filmed. Traditional tales are rewritten and illustrated for children and occasionally also for adults. Children hear a variety of folktales from parents, teachers, and librarians and are encouraged to discuss the precepts therein. “The Three Bears,” which is easy to narrate, is one of these juvenile mainstays, as is “The Little Red Hen,” which is also easy to tell and in addition endorses a work ethic. Folktales from foreign countries are used in schools to teach geography and multiculturalism. In spite of a general feeling that folktales (as opposed to jokes) have been relegated to the nursery, many adults still appreciate them. Cartoons in magazines and newspapers refer to well-known nursery tales. Storytellers tell folktales even to adult audiences, and some psychotherapists use them with their patients. Fables are sustained by proverbial references, for example, to sour grapes and putting all the eggs in one basket. In the scholarly realm, anthropologists utilize folktales to elucidate subtle aspects of the cultures they seek to describe, and the idea of using folktales to explore the human psyche was legitimized by Sigmund Freud and C. G. Jung.

Folktales have long been central to folklore scholarship, which is often said to have begun with Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. In their *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (Children's and household folktales; 1812–1815 and later editions), they identified many of the narrators who told them the tales and included references to other oral and written variants. Although they did not believe that variants of the same tale had developed from an identifiable original form, later scholars did. The comparative method, adapted from philology, was applied to folktales in the belief that the tale's original form and original home could be identified.

Regardless of its sometimes questionable ability to establish an original form, a comparative study, which identifies the amount of variation present in a tale, its region, and its oldest known variants, is the only way to determine the extent of the tradition of a tale. But geography is only one source of social separation. In Europe, judging by studies of folktale narrators and by the names of narrators published in folktale collections, men tend to narrate tales with a male hero, and women tell those with a female; however, this is only a preference, and there is considerable crossover so that people of both sexes narrate tales with male and female protagonists. In societies where the sexes are more separated, strong sex-linked traditions develop, with separate repertoires. Chief characters also give some indication of the groups of people who are likely to appreciate certain tales: farmers, soldiers, travelers, spouses, and children.

Analyses of modern folktales (including jokes), which emphasize the narratives' ability to express social tensions, are able to take into account the relevant aspects (sex, ethnicity, social class) of the narrator and the audience. Intensive collecting from limited areas, which is able to identify the contributions of certain individuals to the folktale tradition there, proves that tradition is nothing other than the cumulative result of individuals' efforts. Folklorists refer to the "logical composition" of tales and even describe tales as living organisms. Stith Thompson and others used the phrase "life history of a tale." "Folktale biology" (from Max Lüthi) refers to the study of tales as they fit into their social and cultural contexts, and the "oikotype" (from C. W. von Sydow, formed from the Greek root of the English word *ecology*) refers to subtypes that have been specially adapted to conform to local folk belief.

European folktale scholarship developed in the nineteenth century, partly in the tradition of Indo-European philology; coupled with the scholarship's strong emphasis on cultural geography, this has resulted in a tendency toward racism. Some early folklorists maintained that tales were inherited, much as words were, in forms that changed in rather regular ways. Others emphasized diffusion: The tale was thought to have traveled from one country to its neighbors. Such notions can be very helpful to describe the pattern of a tale's variations, but they are hypothetical, not proven facts, and thus not strong foundations for further argument. In particular, most so-called Indo-European tales are known to neighboring peoples who speak other kinds of languages (Semitic, Uralic, and Altaic, for example). Especially as more Middle Eastern, African, and Asian variants become known, racial theories of the origin of well-known folktales become difficult to maintain. Rather, scholars must attend to the overall stability of the tales and look for culturally, psychologically, and aesthetically based explanations of their variations.

Johann Gottfried von Herder, reacting against the universality envisioned by philosophers of the Enlightenment, called attention to the uniqueness of each culture, and soon after, the Grimms were pointing to mythology and folklore as

expressions of the German spirit. This attitude is untenable when the folklore in question is also found in other cultures. Most collections of folktales are intended to represent particular countries or regions—many books are titled something like *Folktales of [wherever]*, or *[African/Italian/Mayan/etc.] Folktales*, and folklore archives are regional or national. But most of the tales in such books and archives are told in other places as well. The borders between cultures are indistinct and constantly shifting because contact between neighbors and traders is and always has been very common, and folktales, which can be given away for nothing or swapped for a drink or a meal, are among the most often-traded commodities.

The romantic attitude of the Grimms is still present in the idea that an appreciation of cultural and social context is important for understanding why a particular tale (or a particular joke or song) is performed. (This idea is not very different from that of the historic-geographic scholars regarding the importance of establishing the period and place of origin of each folktale, in order that its origins, history, and prehistory could be determined.) But the same tale, if it is at all popular, is also performed in other, quite different social and cultural contexts. Thus, a tale is able, to some extent, to transcend its context. It is this property that justifies comparative folktale scholarship. It is to be hoped that, as more tales are collected as performed in their natural contexts, the extra information thus obtained will be used along with the knowledge about the forms of the tale that only a comparative study can provide, thereby enhancing our understanding of the tradition.

Christine Goldberg

See Also Dilemma Tales; Epic Laws; Fabulate; Historic-Geographic Method; Legend; Legend, Contemporary; Legend, Urban; Magic Tale; Motif; Myth; Oral-Formulaic Theory; Romantic Nationalism; Tale Type.

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Foodways

The culture-based definition of the edible and the body of customary, verbal, and material traditions that pertain to the utility of food as an instrument of cultural continuity, a sign of group identity, and a significant aspect of folk culture.

The term *foodways* is more unique among the lexicon of folklore and folklife than the concept behind it. When William Graham Sumner introduced the term *folkways* in 1906, he intended to provide a way of describing the knitted wholeness of folk culture—the way in which custom, belief, and expression yield a unique imprint for each of the world's observably different societies. Among the many kinds of things folklorists study, only food approaches the broad vision of Sumner's coinage—an attribution that holds interesting clues to the oddly tangential position foodways has held within the range of folk expression.

Foodways means nothing less than the full consideration of how food and culture intersect—what food says about the people who prepare and consume it and how culture shapes the dietary choices people make.

The first of these areas has more often been the province of popular and academic ethnographers, for whom the observation of eating habits has provided a primary means of differentiating between peoples, often according to the locales they inhabit. The most basic and stereotypical of cultural characterizations—the stuff of elementary school geographies and popular travelogues—make primary reference to the specific foods various peoples eat and often describe the physical or cultural attributes of whole societies in terms of these foods.

Whatever the accuracy of statements about the foods particular people subsist upon, folklore's relatively late coming to the study of food and culture has meant that folklorists are more likely to focus upon particular foods as significant

choices, implicitly rejecting physical determinism in favor of a cultural model—one in which the foods that people eat are believed to say more about who they are than about the edible stuff they have at hand.

In this sense, foodways is a tacitly modern way of looking at some very old traditions, a view informed more by the consumerist decision making of Western market economies than anthropological or archaeological precepts. Therein lies the basis for both the departure of folklorists who study food from the ranks of other social scientists and the appeal of the term *foodways*.

The significant predispositions of pioneer American folklorists toward spoken, sung, or performed expression were confirmed and energized by international folksong revival movements in the postwar era. As a result, emerging Western European configurations of folklife, including the so-called material culture areas of architecture, craft, and costume, entered American folklore scholarship more quietly than they might have. Anthropological interest in the intersection of food and culture had been focused upon during the two decades preceding the folksong revival by the National Research Council's Committee on Food Habits. Under the leadership of Margaret Mead, the committee focused anthropology's prevailing internationalism upon American ethnicity, finding in "food habits" an evident, tangible link between ethnic identity and patterns of commerce, between cookery and community.

The Committee on Food Habits was created in response to wartime concerns about the acceptability of food rationing, the effects of embargoes limiting international commerce in foodstuffs, and the loyalty of immigrant "nationality" groups to the U.S. war effort. Thus, adherence to deeply held traditions, usually considered by folklorists to be a positive cultural indicator, instead designated several American ethnic groups as potential "soft spots" in regard to wartime morale and national security. Despite this odd and unfortunate application of research, the Committee on Food Habits performed an essential transition in the study of foodways. By bringing social scientific rigor to bear upon the everyday eating habits of ordinary Americans, Mead and her colleagues established scholarly precedent for ethnological interest in the social meanings, functions, and values of food, particularly as an accessible marker of cultural community.

To a comparable degree, Don Yoder was instrumental in translating European scholarship into American practice, principally by illustrating European ethnological theory with ongoing fieldwork and historical analysis of Pennsylvania's Old Order Amish and Mennonite communities. The quiet integrity of Yoder's scholarship on recognized folk communities enabled the larger and more challenging theoretical assumptions at the heart of this scholarship to pass into American folkloristic usage almost unnoticed. What was noticed and marginalized at first was the term *folklife*, which seemed from its first American usage in the late 1950s to denote a concept too broad and holistic to coexist peaceably with the more established and accepted *folklore*.

But it was not so much the grand interdisciplinary purpose of folklife studies—to identify and document tradition wherever and however it expressed itself in community life—that opened the door for folklorists’ study of food. Rather, it was the specific attention Yoder, Warren Roberts, Louis Jones, and others devoted to activities less frequently regarded by folklorists as culturally significant—most notably, cookery and costume.

The entry of foodways into the canon of traditional expression had the unintended effect of making the methods and materials of narrowly focused European folklife studies the means to a more inclusive view of tradition in contemporary American society. Foodways rendered moot standing distinctions between “the folk” and “nonfolk” based upon individual repertoires of traditional expression. Since these distinctions were in turn based upon well-established folklore genres of considerable tenure, the folklife movement, with foodways at its ideological bow, succeeded where the folksong revival had failed in reconnecting the notion of tradition to ordinary people and the communities they constituted. Today, foodways and its fellow folklife *émigrés* suggest a domestic, conservative profile of an established discipline against which the idiosyncratic folk artist or protest singer departs. The fact that these contemporary impressions vary so greatly from historical and ideological realities confirms both the infusive effects of folklife studies and American cultural predispositions toward hearth and home.

Even as foodways came to be recognized in American society at large as properly belonging in the niche created for the handmade, the old-fashioned, and the homespun, the ubiquity of the edible made the topic an odd fit for academic taxonomies and nomenclature. Whereas terms like *folk art*, *folksong*, and *folk craft* had come to refer as much to the formal (i.e., *informal*) character of these expressions than the people who produce or understand them, *folk foods* or even *folk cookery* failed to register a comparable degree of recognition or usage. In this regard, foodways benefited considerably from those theoretical advances in folklore studies during the 1970s and 1980s that pushed performance to the forefront of analysis. Proponents of performance theory were not particularly concerned with using its precepts to expand the canon of folk expression, but foodways studies benefited from the introduction of larger units of study, including events that display skill, symbol, and strategy.

If the American vocabulary used to describe culture-as-food and food-as-culture has lagged, foodways by any name has advanced in less than one generation from import to export. Folklorists have laid claim to foodways. In a real sense, foodways seems equally at home in a discipline concerned with how communities express and (in so doing) sustain identity. A five-part division of both the subject and its scholarship reveals what one might expect from a relatively young discipline: a little theory, a great deal of description, efforts toward definition, and a refreshingly high degree of respect for the work of journalists, nutritionists, historians, critics, and social scientists of every stripe.

Production and Gathering of Foodstuffs

Focusing on hunting, agriculture, fishing, gardening—from the lore of determining when to plant potatoes or where the blue crabs are running to the preservation of exotic seed stock—this category groups traditions that thread among issues and enterprises as varied as deciding what is edible and songs that synchronize a dozen hands drawing a fishnet against the current. Folklore’s deep chronicles of challenging occupations—cowboys, commercial fishers, migrant farm workers—yield fresh insight when viewed in the context of the long processes they set in motion.

Distribution of Foodstuffs

This area of foodways study considers how the products of farm and stockyard find their way to the cooks who transform them into food. Calls of street vendors and tobacco auctioneers, pyramids of grapefruit meticulously arranged for market display—these are the artistic evidence of a culture of commerce. Underpinning this culture are assumptions about regions and regionalism that inform a large part of American folklore scholarship. Boundaries observed and crossed construct patterns of place, as specific as a roadside stand in corn country and as general as the custom of giving fruit baskets as a sign of hospitality or sympathy.

Cookery

For much of the relatively brief history of American foodways, cookery has held the high ground, subjugating all else to context. Most apt for performance studies, the centrality of cooking as transformation focuses attention on skills as well as secrets. Unfairly reduced to the brief notation of recipes, cooking is, by definition, individuated and nonreproducible. The traditions associated with cooking range from gender-specified roles and settings to elaborate “scripts” that contain, enact, and signify the relationship between master and apprentice, mother and daughter.

Distribution of Foods

What people do with food when it is ready to be eaten is simply to express with it and through it the substance of identity, sentiment, and community. Such matters as why homemade cakes are being sold at a church bazaar or how the individual bakers who prepared them are identified may matter more than recipes or taste. Yet virtually everything a potluck casserole, table for two, or clambake signifies is allusive and implicit. By examining the array of events in which food is sold or shared, folklorists connect the descriptions of food and travel writers to basic tenets of social science. Image and action are complementary—the groaning table and the feast.

Consumption of Foods

Because we are dominated by an obsessive self-consciousness about what we eat, such matters as when, where, and how food is taken have been largely overlooked.



John Wilt of Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, hoists an empty pie tin after he won the Hemingway Look-Alike Key Lime Pie eating contest, July 20, 2002, in Key West, Florida. (AP/Wide World Photos)

Yet the rules that govern a child's behavior at mealtime or the custom of eating Thanksgiving dinner in midafternoon are as fixed in most American households as preferences for particular foods (enjoyed or forbidden). Oreo cookies consumed filling first or pie-eating contests are obvious examples of how well food serves other needs beyond nourishment—to play, to compete—and a confirmation of how seldom the consumption of food is driven and determined by hunger alone.

Foodways provides a vocabulary of experience that demonstrates the presence and power of tradition in everyday life. The variety of this vocabulary is ample evidence of cultural continuities and identities that are not always easy to exemplify by other means. However, the degree to which food and culture are intertwined renders much of what may be gleaned from the arrangement of a place setting or the clientele of an ethnic food store too common to matter. In this regard, foodways presses a point about which much is assumed but little is said: Is tradition cause or consequence? Is the observable fact that people express themselves—who they are, what they value—through food an imperative for further inquiry or a truism too trite to pursue?

Foodways foregrounds the ordinary in a rhetorical sense but enables, as do other kinds of expression, the extraordinary to become distinguished as the consequence of reasonable comparison. People who do not sing, whistle, or play a musical instrument every day may consider themselves uninvolved in musical traditions. Such people are often gladdened by reminders of the lullabies they have sung to their

children or the evening in a tavern when verses of popular songs rose unexpectedly in their throats. In the same sense, it is not the fact that all people eat that makes foodways culturally significant. Many people do not cook, are not choosy, and eat alone. Such people are involved in foodways when food enables them to connect with family members or friends, practice their faith, or assist someone less fortunate.

Special occasions in which food plays a prominent role, such as Thanksgiving dinner or a country fair, are of particular interest because they are invested by those who participate with a high degree of significance and importance. What has been too frequently overlooked is the less conspicuous role food plays in other sorts of social commerce—from courtship to wedding cake, from potluck to potlatch. Locating significance in this muddy mix of subject, appetite, science, symbol, currency, and taste is a daunting but engaging task. The need to ask (and to know) how people express themselves through food demands attention to circumstance and process, intention and outcome. The contexts in which food assumes significance are as many and as varied as songs and singers, but they often lack the recognizable features that signal a performance in progress. So it is that foodways is perhaps the most common and least comprehended of traditional expressions.

Charles Camp

See Also Custom; Feast; Festival; Folklife.

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Fool

A stock character in folk literature, seasonal festivities, and traditional performances and representations, usually associated with the European Middle Ages and Renaissance but displaying characteristics with parallels among diverse

figures over great historical and cultural range. Basic to the fool role is actual or performed madness or idiocy. Due to a mental deficiency and consequent inability to function in ordinary society, the fool occupies the margins of culture. Here, the fool gains license to speak freely and to reflect on the foibles of others. The familiar costume and cliché antics of the fool frame this “free speech” so that it seems to be mere playful babble or nonsense. However, many cultures perceive a certain wisdom or at least alternative view of the world underlying the contrary, topsy-turvy behavior of the fool. This ability to see the world differently than others and to remain isolated from the mainstream invests the fool with considerable ambiguity, which is sometimes believed to afford this individual divine or clairvoyant powers.

The specifically European fool role and imagery have rather limited historical contexts and, in some cases, very specific allegory. Yet many characteristics of the fool resonate widely with other figures. Inversion, antiauthoritarianism, parody, sexuality, ambiguity, and earthiness are essential to fools, tricksters, shamans, and clowns. On the one hand, these figures are essential to their cultural contexts; on the other hand, they reveal the weaknesses and limits of their cultures by burlesquing and debasing sacred ceremonies and objects, highlighting the foreign, playing with language, and associating with misfortune. The linguistic play of Groucho Marx may be worlds away from Zuni clowns speaking Spanish or English to the gods, but both demonstrate the power of foolery.

Costume and Symbolism of the Fool

Traditional European fools utilize a fairly consistent repertoire of costume elements and implements that draw attention to their special status. These costume motifs, which developed over hundreds of years but became fairly stable by the early modern period, assist the fools in their commentary on society and are themselves open to diverse interpretations. On the head, the typical fool wears a cap topped with bell-tipped ass ears. Fools often tote bells on their scepters, shoes, or belts as well. In addition to serving as audible attention-getters for the fool, bells on the costume may have originated as a satire of a medieval fashion element that began among the elite and then became a veritable fad among citizens. The prominent ass ears in representations of the fool suggest that the fool is as obstinate as this notorious beast. The ears perhaps also indicate the pronounced and unrestrained sexuality common to the animal and the fool. Some fools also feature a rooster’s comb on their heads. At times, the behavior of fools can be likened to the crowing, masculine boasting of the cock. Many implements carried by fools reinforce the phallic imagery of the fool: stretching shears that extend to pinch women, fur-tipped poles also used to taunt female bystanders, and handheld sausages. In festivals, fools frequently grab and harass women. The plowing fool who spreads seeds or even tiny images of the fool is also a familiar character in

festivals and traditional pictorial representations. Contemporary folklore in areas where fools inhabit carnival celebrations tells of masked fools seducing and impregnating young women, who must bear the children out of wedlock when the fathers remain anonymous. These and other children born in late fall as a result of the heightened sexuality and increased license associated with fools and their springtime rites are sometimes referred to as carnival children.

The dress of fools consists of a motley of colors and fabrics. A patchwork of rags or other material commonly covers the body of the fool. This apparel might owe its origin to the lowly status of the fool, who must make do with available materials. Some interpreters see the patches as Christian allegory of the sins committed by fools and others distant from the teachings of the church. Another view holds that this costume derives from earlier representations of wild men and creatures believed to live on the periphery of towns and villages. The colorful, patchwork apparel does bear resemblance to more mystical figures, such as the pied piper of Hamelin and shamanic figures in many cultures. Whether or not these similarities are historical, all of these figures do embody the mysterious power of ambiguity.

An alternate dress for the fool features the more refined tights and bicolor scheme of the harlequin. Here, theatrical stylization has replaced elements of folk belief, but traces of duality and ambiguity remain in the binary pattern.

Items fools hold in their hands include mirrors, books, scepters, baubles, and animal bladders. Mirrors and books can symbolize both the vanity of the fools themselves and their propensity to depict and document the foolishness of others. A fool gazing into a mirror differs little from a fool standing face-to-face with a scepter adorned with a fool's head. In either case, the fool admires its own external features and prefers them to those of ordinary folk. Likewise, a glass bauble can serve as a distorting mirror, reflecting the image of the fool. The scepter or bauble also serves as a parody of the paraphernalia of the royals who frequently employed fools. A pig's bladder, often attached to a stick made from a dried ox phallus, resembles a glass bauble but is used instead to beat the ground. This behavior shows the impishness of fools, while also linking them to fertility rites that involve pounding and stomping the soil.

Contexts of the Fool

In European tradition, we can distinguish among professional fools, actors playing the role of fool, and literary fools. Professional fools are those who earn a living on the basis of their recognized mental and social deficiencies. Their profession dates to ancient Greece and Rome and appears in Italy, France, Germany, and England from the Middle Ages and Renaissance. The European court fool is the best-known incarnation of the professional fool. References to this figure date from the twelfth century, but some evidence suggests this fool is derived

from Eastern, Celtic, and Roman predecessors. Court fools often had physical deformities, which, like mental flaws, prevented them from participating in ordinary social roles. In this regard, they are similar to the “freaks” (e.g., dwarfs and grotesques) and exotics who appeared at carnivals and fairs. The activities of court fools ranged from serving as a sort of lap dog accompanying royalty or roaming in and out of the court and into local taverns and establishments (much like a village idiot) to more formal performances at feasts and gatherings. Some court jesters would regularly read the news to the court, much like contemporary comics such as Jay Leno or Howard Stern who base their routines on reading and commenting on news stories.

Mimetic fool performances occur in the theater, folk dramas, and festivals. Numerous playwrights, Shakespeare foremost among them, have relied on the characteristics of fools for dramatic effect. Often, fool figures serve to point out the foolishness in all people, that is, they provide a mirror in which other characters and the audience may see themselves so that they may correct their weaknesses. In act 1, scene 2 of *As You Like It*, Celia remarks to Touchstone, the fool: “By my troth, thou sayest true; for, since the little wit that fools have was silenced, the little foolery that wise men have makes a great show.” Until the late sixteenth century, theatrical fools were modeled primarily on the existing social type of the fool. By the seventeenth century, a purely theatrical creation, the harlequin, began to provide the model. The harlequin role emphasizes physical agility rather than the traditional symbolism associated with the fool. Although retaining the fool’s lack of moral sense, the harlequin does not derive from social ideology and therefore has no mystical or subversive tendencies.

A variety of traditional plays also feature fools in important roles. Among these plays are the sketches performed by traveling troupes that thrived prior to the Enlightenment. These skits often revolve around jest figures, such as Hans Wurst (John Sausage), who fail to perceive basic realities of everyday life properly, thus finding themselves in all manner of laughable predicaments. Similar sketches are featured at local celebrations where town residents become amateur performers to stage humorous plays, such as “The Old Wives’ Mill” in which a series of farmers rejuvenate their haggard wives until the fool causes the mill to malfunction and produce an even less desirable mate. These amateur comic plays provide a counterpoint to local productions of religious plays (such as reenactments of the Passion of Christ).

Certain calendrical festivals, such as carnival or the Feast of Fools (December 28), have given rise to special groups of fools (fools’ guilds, *sociétés joyeuses*) that perform their antics in public. Unlike professional fools, these actors do not take their roles because of their physical or mental disabilities but rather because of the license provided them—often as one of various rights given to trade guilds—by civic authorities. Festival fools draw on the same costume elements,

behavior, and symbolism as other fools. They also go beyond these specific motifs and engage more generally in the inversion of the ordinary by constructing entire worlds in the mirror image of the normal, thus criticizing and satirizing ordinary society and engaging in licentious behavior. These fools do not provide an ongoing voice opposed to the mainstream but rather engage themselves and their audiences in a periodic release of the tensions of the everyday and offer alternative visions of social organization.

Fools also appear as central characters in European popular literature, beginning in the late Middle Ages. Works such as *The Ship of Fools* and *Till Eulenspiegel* continue to be widely translated and read and to provide inspiration for new representations. The former recounts, in rhyming verse, many of the features of the fool and relates how these characteristics afflict many of us. The latter follows the life of a rogue. Although Eulenspiegel does not dress like a typical fool, his adventures come about because his limited wisdom and understanding lead him to perceive situations and language incorrectly or literally. For example, he mistakes a kitchen mustard plant for hemp and defecates on it as he was instructed to do when encountering the latter plant. In some episodes, Eulenspiegel is downright malicious rather than ignorant. His antics resemble those of tricksters found in various oral traditions as much as those of traditional fools. Despite their differences, both of these character types share an emphasis on lower bodily strata—sexuality, excretion, exhibitionism—and antiauthoritarian tendencies. Audiences for these works in different eras and cultures certainly have different understandings of the motifs depicted, but these general tendencies seem to have universal appeal.

Peter Tokofsky

See Also Carnival; Drama, Folk; Festival; Trickster.

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Formula

Smallest functional “word” or unit of phraseology in oral-formulaic theory, defined by Milman Parry as “an expression regularly used, under the same metrical conditions, to express an essential idea.” First investigated in the ancient Greek *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the formula was initially understood as a symptom of traditional diction, of a compositional idiom fashioned over generations and passed down to Homer. Primary examples include noun-epithet formulas (e.g., “swift-footed Achilles,” “white-armed Hera”) and complementary, line-filling verbal phrases (e.g., “he/she spoke”). Parry later concluded that traditional formulaic language also must be oral, furnishing the bard with a ready means of composing in performance, and he consequently undertook textual analyses of passages from the Homeric epics to illustrate the density of formulas and the poet’s dependence upon them.

The first expansion in the concept arose from Parry’s and Albert Lord’s fieldwork on still extant oral epic poetry in the former Yugoslavia. On the basis of correspondences between ancient Greek, known only in manuscript texts, and south Slavic, which they were able to experience and record firsthand, Parry and Lord argued by analogy that Homer’s poems were oral and traditional. Both poetries revealed many examples of phrases repeated either verbatim or with patterned variation, with individual formulas composed of “formulaic systems,” or groups of phrases related by their metrical and syntactic identity. The phraseology also showed extension (in the number of formula within a given system) and thrift (“the degree in which [a formulaic system] is free of phrases which, having the same metrical value and expressing the same idea, could replace one another”).

From this basis, scholars pursued the phenomenon of formulaic phraseology in numerous different traditions, many of them manuscript-based poetries—Old and Middle English, Old French, medieval and later Spanish, and medieval German—and the method was extended to biblical studies, Chinese, international ballad studies, Finnish, central Asian epic, Russian, medieval and modern music, and numerous other areas. In many cases, the object was to demonstrate a certain percentage of formulaic density and then to pronounce the given text “oral” or “written” on that criterion alone. In recent years, the reliability of the quantitative approach as a litmus test has been strongly questioned, and universal definitions and concepts have been pluralized to reflect inherent differences among traditions.

Formula studies have consistently raised the issue of whether a performer dependent on this idiom was also its prisoner, that is, whether the compositional method was so constricting as to hamper artistic expression. Another problem that has arisen is the unpredicted persistence of this originally oral-traditional diction after the introduction of writing and in fact its actual use by literate authors. Both issues may be addressed by observing that formulas activate a metonymic network of meaning, the concrete part standing for the untextualized

whole, and that this network persists after the advent of texts as long as there is an audience able to “speak the language.” Phrases such as “swift-footed Achilles” are neither merely mechanistic nor uniquely appropriate to each context; rather, they use a telltale detail to summon the named character, object, or situation in its full traditional resonance. Formulas do much more than provide ready metrical solutions for compositional challenges, then; they amount to keys to the implicit word-hoard of tradition.

John Miles Foley

See Also Bard; Oral-Formulaic Theory.

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Frame

A set of metacommunicative premises or expectations guiding the exercise and interpretation of activity and perception. A frame can be explicitly or implicitly signaled by *framing devices* (i.e., a type of extant metacommunicative cue) that suggest the relevant premise set as well as the boundaries of the message set to which those premises should be applied. In short, a frame provides information about how messages “contained within” the frame (i.e., delimited by the frame’s signaling devices) are intended to be understood.

In 1955, Gregory Bateson introduced the concept of the “psychological frame” to account for the ways in which individuals indicate to one another the level of abstraction at which messages are intended. Bateson based his insights in part on his observation of monkeys interacting with one another at the zoo. The monkeys employed seemingly hostile signals resembling those typically associated with combat in order to indicate that their actions were actually to be understood as non-combat—specifically, as play. Bateson concluded that the monkeys had engaged in

a type of *metacommunication* (i.e., communication about communication): The monkeys had signaled the frame-indicating message “This is play.”

Drawing in part on Bateson, sociologist Erving Goffman developed the transi-tuational analysis of frame in terms of the domain of social ritual he called the *interaction order*. With this term, Goffman referred to participants’ structuring, process coordination, and interpretation of their own and each other’s involvement in face-to-face interaction. For Goffman, social meaning was situated; thus, his basic unit of study was the social situation. In his 1982 American Sociological Association presidential address, Goffman described the social situation as providing a “natural theater” whose achieved orderliness resulted from its participants’ application of “systems of enabling conventions.”

To Goffman, one of the more important of these enabling conventions was the idea of frame. In *Frame Analysis* and *Forms of Talk*, Goffman treated frame as both a cognitive resource and a socially emergent and indicatable tool by which participants organize their interactional experience. He began his analysis by discussing *primary frameworks*: schemas of interpretation by which people understand the “basic facts” of (1) natural activity (e.g., the assumption that time is singular and irreversible), and (2) social activity (e.g., the assumption that the sounds emitted from an individual’s mouth constitute speech or the interpretation that two individuals are “actually” fighting as opposed to “just” play-fighting). Goffman then turned to two major ways in which primary frameworks can be transformed (i.e., framed): keying and fabrications. A *keyed* frame patterns activity—in whole or in part—on some primary framework, but its participants share an implicit understanding that another type of activity (other than that of a primary framework) is occurring.

Events that are keyed to varying degrees include: animal play, human play (including ludic folklore, such as riddling or the telling of narrative jokes), day-dreaming, dramatic scriptings (such as folk and theatrical plays and televised dramas and situation comedies), sporting contests, and instrumental demonstrations. Keyings are themselves vulnerable to the transformation of *rekeying* (i.e., reframing), as in instances of mimicry or parody (e.g., anti-[or catch] legends that poke fun at scary story legends). In contrast to keyed frames, fabrication frames are transformations of unequal *footing* (i.e., of unequal alignment in participants’ relationships to their own and their coparticipants’ involvement and to the messages contained within the frame). In short in a *fabrication*, one or more participants manage activity such that other participants are encouraged to have a false idea about what is going on. Examples of *benign fabrications* (in which the dupe’s personal interests are not seriously jeopardized) include surprise parties, benign practical jokes, and experiments in which subjects are hoaxed into a false understanding of what the experiment is testing. Examples of *exploitative fabrications* (in which the construction is inimical to the dupe’s personal interests) include undercover spying, false witnessing, and financial cons and scams.

Goffman also raised the issues of frame anchoring, frame clarity, frame involvement, and out-of-frame activity. According to Goffman, framed activity is anchored to (i.e., grounded in) the environing world in several ways, among them: (1) through participants' use of initial, medial, and/or terminal framing devices called *brackets* (e.g., the chairman's gavel calling a meeting to order and later adjourning it; narrative beginning and ending formulas, such as "once upon a time" and "they lived happily ever after"; or the signals given for time-outs during a football game), and (2) through the fact of participants' bodily presence in the interaction (e.g., the physical relationship of person to adopted interactional role is said to be in balance when an actor is hired to play the role of a villain in part because the actor can sneer in a particularly effective manner; alternatively, in Goffman's words, "role gives way to person" when, for instance, a performer must cancel a performance due to personal illness). *Frame clarity* (i.e., the arrangement obtaining when all participants share a working consensus as to what is going on) can become ambiguous during instances of (1) *misframing* (as when the sound of a car backfiring is mistaken for the sound of a gunshot), or (2) *frame disputes* (e.g., husband-wife arguments about who did what to whom and why). A participant's *frame involvement* (i.e., the level of engrossment in a framed activity) is held up to question when the participant *breaks frame* (i.e., he or she engages in activity to which the official frame cannot be applied). Examples include: (1) *flooding-out* (e.g., when an individual dissolves into laughter or anger at an inappropriate moment); and (2) *downkeying*—that is, frame movement toward or into a primary framework (e.g., when playfulness gets out of hand—perhaps during the use of ritual insults—and a participant becomes angry, feeling that his or her personal interests have been violated). Finally, Goffman argued that multiple *laminations* (i.e., layers of frame) can be developed in any situation and that information from multiple channels can become available during any given interaction. Some of this latter information can result from *out-of-frame* activity (i.e., activity that is alternate to the interaction's official focus and to which participants either only partially attend or try officially to ignore). Examples include information presented (1) through an *overlay channel* (e.g., the announcement of a storm warning that runs across [i.e., overlays] the bottom of one's television screen while another program is in progress), or (2) in sounds that participants relegate to the *disattend track* (e.g., participants' trying to ignore the sound of a baby crying during a church service).

In contrast to Goffman, who often based his consideration of frame on anecdotes of behavioral situations drawn from mainstream American life, sociolinguist John Gumperz treated frame in light of conversational discourse obtained from members of culturally heterogeneous, urbanized communities. Gumperz argued that cultures can differ markedly in their expectations for *communicative competence*, which (when viewed in interactional terms) includes knowledge not only of linguistic grammar and the lexicon but also of the social conversations by which speakers

signal information about communicative intent and conversational cooperation. During conversations, a speaker uses such conventions to prompt his or her hearer to make *conversational inferences*—that is, to develop situated or context-bound interpretations of the speaker’s current intent as well as to formulate expectations of what is to come. Such inferences contribute to the listener’s development of frames (in the Bateson-Goffman sense of the interactive frame—that is, frames developed during social interaction) for understanding the conversation. At this level of interpretation, participants attend to what Gumperz called *contextualization cues*—that is, message signals (usually culturally learned) that acquire implicit but context-specific meaning by virtue of their use in actual conversations. Such cues function as framing devices, but they also often occur in sets and can operate at a greater degree of interactional subtlety than devices typically discussed by Goffman. Examples of contextualization cues include: the speaker’s use of code, dialect, and/or style switching (as in bilingual joke telling among ethnic participants of a non-Brooklyn-raised storyteller switching to a Brooklyn dialect to represent the speech of a story character), prosody (including intonation, changes in loudness, and utterance chunking through pauses), lexical and syntactic choice (e.g., a storyteller’s simplifying of vocabulary and syntax to represent the speech of a child character), formulaic expressions (such as “in-group” language), and conversational opening, closing, and sequencing strategies. Nonverbal cues include facial and kinesic signs (e.g., a listener’s frowning to indicate displeasure, a speaker’s snapping his or her fingers to reinforce the meaning “just like that!” or a storyteller’s flexing a bicep to indicate a character’s strength), body postures (e.g., a storyteller’s bowing the shoulders to indicate the advanced age of a character or, in social interaction, the turning of one’s back on a coparticipant to indicate one’s disgust with that person), proxemic distance (e.g., a speaker moving in close to a coparticipant during the sharing of a secret), and gaze direction (e.g., looking one’s coparticipant straight in the eye to suggest the truth of what one is saying). Contextualization cues can be ambiguous or even uninterpretable if considered individually. Therefore, in interpreting conversational utterances in situ, competent listeners look for multiple cues that fit culturally learned *co-occurrence expectations*; in other words, the cues co-occur at various levels of communication within the same stretch of the speaker’s talk, and the cues reinforce each other such that the constellation (or set) they form is interpreted as indicating meaning. A constellation of contextualization cues can be used to signal, for example, the speaker’s membership in some group (e.g., one’s smiling and employing hugs or slaps on the back when joining a group of friends), the speaker’s attitude (Goffman’s “footing”—for example, a listener’s raising the eyebrows and mouthing “Wow!” to indicate surprise at a speaker’s message), or the conclusion of the speaker’s turn at talking (e.g., a speaker’s extended pausing coupled with a direct and anticipatory gaze at the coparticipant). Gumperz also used *frame* in terms more recently associated with the concept of *schemata*—that is, as

“a set of expectations that rests on previous experience.” To Gumperz, the interpretive process in a conversation begins with the participants’ making implicit but culturally informed guesses about the type of speech activity being developed—for example, “chatting about the weather” or “telling a story.” Participants base their guesses on their previous experience with similar situations and on cultural knowledge. Informed guesses allow participants to anticipate, for instance, the turn-taking procedures, overall themes, and possible outcomes of the conversation. Whether treating frame in the sense of schemata or of interactive frame, Gumperz pointed out that frames relevant later in a conversation are subject to interpretation in terms of frames that were pertinent earlier in the same conversation. Alternately, frames pertinent later in a conversation can be used to reframe understandings believed to be relevant earlier in the same conversation. Gumperz emphasized that the development of meaning in and throughout a conversation is not a matter of unilateral action but is “rather [one] of speaker-listener coordination involving [the] rhythmic interchange of both verbal and nonverbal signs.”

Since verbal folklore (story and joke telling, riddling, ballad singing, and so forth) and nonverbal folklore (such as folk gestures) constitute either framed activity or behavior that can frame other activity, the consideration of contextualization cues and frame use is especially pertinent to folklore study. Many contextualization cues (such as the shrugging of one’s shoulders to indicate doubt) are culturally learned and thus traditional. Some, though, are emergent within their context of use (e.g., a storyteller’s marked [perhaps sarcastic or exaggerated] reuse of a particular phrase or gesture in order to suggest narrative continuity or to encourage audience participation). Whether the cueing devices are traditional or emergent, participants’ use and understanding of them represent valuable information for the field-worker, signaling the participants’ commitment to the interaction as well as the participants’ attitudes toward each other.

An example of a study of framing in the domain of storytelling is Katharine Young’s “Frame and Boundary in the Phenomenology of Narrative.” Influenced in part by the work of Gregory Bateson in defining frame, Young has explored how frame operates in conversational narration. She sets the stage for this exploration by distinguishing two ontological presentations of stories in conversation: stories as a “realm of discourse transpiring in the here and now,” which she calls a “storyrealm,” and stories as a “realm of events transpiring in another space and time,” which she calls a “taleworld.” Tale characters and events inhabit the taleworld, whereas the storyrealm is inhabited by the participants of the storytelling event as they interact with one another as the event transpires. Young’s investigation considers four types of narrative frame: frames and evaluations of the story and frames and evaluations of the events the story is about.

Frames in the form of prefaces and codas operate as boundaries between the realm of conversation and either the taleworld or the storyworld. Both prefaces

and codas function within the domain of conversation. Prefaces may, for instance, announce a new speech event by saying, “I’ve got a new story for you.” Codas follow the end of the events in the tale and are designed to link that just past realm to the present-time conversation. In discussing frames that are not boundaries, Young begins with orientations that provide information deemed necessary in order to understand what is happening in the taleworld (e.g., “Jean and I were going up a narrow lane in Cornwall”). In establishing the background against which events unfold, orientations “set up the angle from which hearers apprehend those events.” Next, Young takes up those frames she calls evaluations. Evaluation has been described by sociolinguist William Labov as the “means used by the narrator to indicate the point of the narrative, its *raison d’être*: why it was told and what the narrator was getting at.” Young fine-tunes this point to show a distinction between the point of the story and the point of telling the story. The first “pertains to the relationship between events in the story and the second to the relationship between the story and the occasion on which it is told.” Labov comments that to identify the evaluative portion of a narrative it is “necessary to know why the narrative is tellable.” Young rejoinders that events are not just tellable, but tellable on occasions, and that it is their relevance to an occasion that is the point of the telling. Young concludes by pointing out that not all types of frames occur in every story in her corpus, and only four types seem to be essential: a preface, the beginning and ending, and some sort of evaluation.

Danielle M. Roemer

See Also Discourse Analysis; Linguistic Approach; Performance.

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Freedom Songs

The umbrella term describing the diverse body of songs adapted, adopted, or composed for use during the American civil rights movement. These songs had their highest public profile during so-called Freedom Summer (1964), when hundreds of



Arthur Fredericks, center, leads singing marchers onto Boston Common for a civil rights rally, May 9, 1968. The march from the Roxbury area is part of the northern leg of the Poor People's March on Washington. (AP/Wide World Photos)

young volunteers, most of them well-educated white children of privilege, joined forces with visiting and resident black activists to attempt to change race relations in the South (focusing on voter registration, particularly in Mississippi). Many of these songs remain familiar today: “This Little Light of Mine,” “Ain’t Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me ‘Round,” “We Shall Overcome,” and so forth. Such music became a critical ingredient in activities ranging from mass meetings to picketing county courthouses during pivotal days in the voter registration drive. Singing expressed unity in the desire for change, and made moments of negotiation, complaint or confrontation palpable, emotionally powerful, and diplomatically successful. Many civil rights leaders emphasized how indispensable music was to the strength and cohesiveness of the movement. Indeed, music minimized the inevitable tensions that arose between the populations trying against the odds to get along while working together in their urgent common cause. Black movement organizers had to craft strategies to convince black Southerners to transform anger and resentment into carefully measured action, and liberal white volunteers had to function in a very traditional culture more alien to them than they could have anticipated. Freedom songs smoothed the way, performing indispensable diplomatic functions at many steps in the development and activities of the movement.

Some freedom songs (e. g., “Dog, Dog”) were intricate display pieces best suited for skilled concertizers. However, the freedom songs that achieved the most

extensive general use joined black performance practice with relatively simple melodic contours and highly repetitive lyrics easy for less-skilled locals and visiting white volunteers to grasp. Those volunteers, whom Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) leaders had justifiably worried would include patronizing or simply harmfully innocent individuals, were impressed (and usefully humbled) by local blacks' greater command of oral skills, including singing. Thus, the basic nature of the repertoire embodied interracial diplomacy, and blacks' singing skill helped keep that fragile diplomacy from foundering. Song was also important in black activists' convincing black citizens to risk their jobs and safety by attempting to register to vote. Indeed, church music in many black communities was changed by the arrival of freedom songs, the black singer-teachers of which incorporated more physical motion and musical liberties than many local black churchgoers had been accustomed to employing. Since most of the most popular freedom songs issued from black religious tradition (that is, were black hymns or spirituals with the words changed slightly), and since most mass meetings were held in churches, it became natural for freedom song performances to contribute to a more ardently black performance style on Sundays.

Chris Goertzen

See Also African American Folklore; Folksong, Narrative; Music, Folk.

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Freudian Psychology

The theory and techniques developed by Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), the founder of psychoanalysis. The term is also applied liberally by nonspecialists to label approaches of “depth psychology” investigating unconscious mental processes and to certain methods of psychotherapy that are attributable, directly or indirectly, to Freud. Such approaches and methods are so characterized when they address data that are erotic, incestuous along parent-child lines, noncognitive, and symbolic.

Freud was born in Freiberg, Moravia (now in Pířbor, Czech Republic), and raised in Vienna. He was considered the brightest of the eight children of a Jewish businessman of modest means and given preferential treatment; he was trained as

a medical doctor and began his professional life as a clinical neurologist. He soon became aware of the profound impact that sexual experiences had exerted on the minds and bodies of certain patients, and his search for explanations of this phenomenon led him gradually to the components of his theories. The cornerstones of Freud's psychoanalytic approach are the interplay between unconscious and conscious psychological processes, the hereditary nature of instinctual drives, and the three-level systemic structure of the mind (or psyche).

One of Freud's cardinal contributions to the study of human psychology was his identification of the unconscious as a psychic entity controlled by considerations and forces different than those governing the conscious mind. Within the unconscious, feelings and ideas assume ever-shifting patterns—combinations and configurations of the concrete and the abstract, the tangible and the intangible, the known and the unknown, the logical and the illogical, and so on—all under symbolic guises. Thus, two dissimilar ideas or images may be fused into one; experiences that are interconnected may be shifted or displaced out of context; feelings and thoughts may be portrayed in the form of dramatic images rather than expressed as abstract concepts; and certain objects may be represented in symbolic guise by images of other entities, although the resemblance between the symbol and the original object may be incomprehensible.

Recognition of these unconscious mental modes of operation made possible the understanding of such previously mystifying psychological phenomena as dreaming and, by extension, such cultural phenomena as myth making, and similar group experiences.

A basic premise of Freudian theory is that instinctual impulses (drives), especially the sexual, which originate in childhood, trigger unconscious conflicts. Thus, adult sexuality is a product of a complex process of biological development beginning in childhood; this development goes through stages determined by a variety of body functions or areas (zones) and the child's relation to adults, especially to parents. These psychosexual stages are: the oral, the anal, and the phallic or genital.

According to Freud, the child becomes capable of an emotional attachment to the parent of the opposite sex for the first time during the Oedipal stage (four to six years of age). However, physical and intellectual immaturity prevent the child from satisfying these desires (that is, they frustrate realization of fantasies); consequently, the desires are unconsciously associated with failure and suppressed. These early patterns of conflict serve as prototypes for an individual's development (and conflicts) during later stages of life, especially in such situations as relationships to parental figures and authority and dependency on others.

The structure of the psychic system is designated in a three-level hierarchy: the id, ego, and superego. The id signifies the sexual and aggressive tendencies that arise from the Triebe (primary or biological drives, libido, and so forth); it is primitive and pleasure oriented. The superego refers to internalized standards

initially imposed by parental figures and subsequently by all acquired religious, ethical, and moral rules of conduct; the superego controls the ego in accordance with these rules. If the person fails to conform to the admonitions of the superego, he or she may feel shame or guilt (compare with anxiety). The ego is the domain of such functions as perception, thinking, and motor control that can accurately assess environmental conditions. It mediates between the dictates of the id and the constraints of the superego. Defensive mechanisms (e.g., repression, projection, rationalization, identification) protect the ego against the injurious effects of these early experiences and similar unacceptable impulses. Nonetheless, like water in an earthenware jar that filters out through its porous wall (weak points), the contents of the unconscious are externalized through dreams and folk narratives (Freud's critics facetiously labeled this aspect of his theory hydraulic).

Evolutionary postulates about the human "primordial horde" presupposing the genetic transmission (biological inheritance) of historical experiences provide the rationale for the origins of the Freudian theoretical model and also argue for the universality of its constituents (e.g., the Oedipus complex). Adjustments introduced into this biologically determined Freudian model are referred to as neopsychoanalytic (neo-Freudian). Typically, revisions place more emphasis on social and cultural considerations.

In folklore and anthropology, drastic criticism has been leveled at Freudian approaches, ranging from their blindness to social and cultural factors to their sensationalism, and they have been attacked as comprising "a nontheistic" belief system (i.e., a matter of unquestioning faith) whose dogmas lie beyond verification. Yet the various Freudian approaches have been dominant in the study of learned traditions—to the detriment of other cognitive types of psychological systems, especially those dealing with the psychology of learning.

Hasan El-Shamy

See Also Jungian Psychology; Psychoanalytic Interpretations of Folklore; Psychological Approach.

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Frontier Folk Heroes

Frontier nations of the New World, including the United States of America, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, have all developed distinctive folk heroes and heroines that are usually associated with pioneering activities such as exploring, subduing indigenous peoples, stock droving, lumbering, mining, and other forms of mainly rural life and labor. Most of these characters have a larger-than-life quality and are typically braggarts and liars of sometimes astounding audacity. Notable in this respect was the American figure Davy Crockett.

As well as their propensity to exaggeration, pioneer heroes are often credited with a down-to-earth wisdom, usually expressed in pithily humorous form and often collected into books and almanacs sold in great numbers, thus helping to spread the fame and folklore of their subjects. A well-known American example of this type was the frontiersman Daniel Boone (1734–1820). He is credited with the discovery of the Cumberland Gap through the Appalachian Mountains, and over a long and adventurous life he became the center of many legends about his strength, prowess, cunning, and scorn of danger and death. Jim Bowie, best known as the inventor of the knife that bears his name, was another focus of pioneering legends and traditions in Texas, while Kit (Christopher) Carson (1809–1868), pioneer and backwoodsman, achieved fame for his knowledge of the country and his positive relationship with Native Americans. He is the subject of tall tales of backwoods life, many of which are also told of other backwoods and frontier heroes.

A slightly later development usually found in New World societies is the frontier “type.” In the United States, this person is represented by the cowboy, and in Australia by the bushman. Each of these types generates usually mythical characters whose folklore is derived from the circumstances and imperatives of frontier life. Thus Pecos Bill is a cowboy hero in the United States and elsewhere. Crooked Mick is a shearer’s hero in Australia. In addition, there are usually historical characters who, to a greater or lesser extent, through their own self-aggrandizement, come to be seen in the role of frontier heroes. These figures include William “Buffalo Bill” Cody (1846–1917), army scout, pony express rider, showman, and buffalo hunter, who earned his nickname for shooting almost 5,000 buffalo to supply railway workers with fresh meat. His name and feats became more widely known through his touring with his Wild West Show from 1883. James Butler “Wild Bill” Hickock (1837–1876) was a similar case.



Portrait of frontier heroine Annie Oakley, ca. 1899. (Library of Congress)

Such masculine activities and images also generate their gender opposites in the form of the cowgirl, perhaps the best known being American rodeo rider and sharp shooter Annie Oakley (Phoebe Annie Oakley Moses, 1860–1926), who garnered a reputation as a frontier heroine who could equal or outdo men in the male-dominated activities at which she excelled. Oakley is a historical character squarely in the tradition of the female—usually fictional—who dresses in man’s attire and operates in a man’s world. Annie Oakley was celebrated and romanticized in Irving Berlin’s 1946 musical *Annie Get Your Gun*.

As well as their presence in folktales of various forms, frontier heroes may also appear in songs and balladry associated with their deeds, both real and folkloric. All frontier societies have extensive bodies of such traditions. Frequently the images of such characters have been considerably embellished and extended by historians, writers, and filmmakers, often in relation to the development of myths and stereotypes of national identity.

The other side of the frontier also tends to develop heroic characters. These heroes are noted either for the unselfish assistance they give to those who will inevitably invade their land, such as Native American woman Pocahontas, also called Matoaka, who, according to tradition, saved English explorer John Smith’s life on

Johnny Appleseed

Known as Johnny Appleseed, John Chapman (1774–1845) traveled throughout the American Midwest, planting apple seeds wherever he went. His ragged, unkempt appearance, his knowledge of plant lore, and his simple philosophy made him a much-loved figure and one around whom various traditions grew up. His love of nature was said to be so great that he would extinguish his campfires rather than have mosquitoes burned in the flames. There may be some truth in this legend, as Chapman died of exposure.

While there is more than a hint of the self-conscious and the manufactured surrounding the Johnny Appleseed story, folklorists have discovered widespread evidence of his persistence in oral tradition, with local orchards often being said to have originated in the passing and casting of Johnny Appleseed. However, it seems likely that these are retrospective traditions elaborated from the popularization of Johnny Appleseed in children's books, a Disney film, and the verse of popular poets like Carl Sandburg and Vachel Lindsay. Johnny Appleseed has also been commemorated on a U.S. postage stamp, a sure sign of national hero status.

Graham Seal



Old stamp featuring folk hero Johnny Appleseed. (Shaday365/Dreamstime.com)

two occasions and was an important mediator between the newcomers and the indigenous people of what is now the state of Virginia. Other figures may be villains to the pioneers they defy but heroes to the indigenous peoples who the pioneers are, usually violently, displacing. Heroes of this type include the Native American Cochise and the indigenous Australians Yagan, Pemulway, and Jandamurra (“Pigeon”), among many others.

Graham Seal

See Also Culture Hero; Hero/Heroine, Folk; National Folk Heroes.

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Functionalism

In folklore studies, the view that every folklore item must have a function. Here, the expectation is that every proverb, tale, folk belief, or ballad must satisfy some important cultural, social, or psychological function. This view of the functional in folklore is parallel to Bronislaw Malinowski's position that everything in human life must have a function.

On a more theoretical level, three kinds of functionalism play an important role in social sciences literature on the topic. The first posits that it is the needs of the psychobiological human entity that are at center stage, the second emphasizes the roles and functions of social structures within the group, and the third approach to functionalism argues for social cohesion through the shared mental structures of the "conscience collective." The first of these is represented by the work of Bronislaw Malinowski, the second by the writings of Reginald Radcliffe-Brown, and the third by writings of Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss. Given that a great deal of folklore consists of either beliefs or the oral aspects of culture, it would seem that the works of Durkheim and Mauss are the most significant for many folklorists. Malinowski's biopsychological work, however, is relevant for folklorists who are interested in material folklore.

As one of the great field-workers of all time, Malinowski was convinced that every detail of a culture (and this most certainly would include its folklore) had a function. If any social scientist would have the exclusive rights to be called an archfunctionalist, that would certainly be Bronislaw Malinowski. In anthropology, he and Radcliffe-Brown are viewed as the founders of modern functionalism. However, their functionalisms are dramatically different. Radcliffe-Brown's is a structural functionalism, whereas Malinowski's functionalism is based on human biology and psychology. It must be noted that this biopsychological approach pays close attention to the individual and de-emphasizes the importance of the social system as having a reason of existence beyond that of the individual; for Malinowski, functionalism is a metamorphosis of the seven needs of the individual: nutrition, reproduction, bodily comforts, safety, relation, movement, and growth into the secondary needs of society. The needs of the individual are satisfied by the social structure of his or her culture, whose function it is to satisfy those human needs. In other words, every social institution has a need to satisfy, and so does every item in a culture. For folklorists, this means that even the smallest item one collects, such as a single folk belief, has a function to perform both at the level of the individual and at the level of the society and the culture. Malinowski gives us the ultimate in a functional approach. In contrast to Malinowski's interest in the individual and biopsychological approaches, Radcliffe-Brown was interested in the functioning of the social structure.

Radcliffe-Brown has had significant influence in both anthropology and sociology. The functionalist dimension of his work and its structural underpinnings constitute the foundation of structural functionalism in social anthropology as well as in sociological thought. In a period when American anthropology under Franz Boas's influence was putting increasing emphasis on fieldwork, Radcliffe-Brown's main interests remained in generalization and theory. His two major methodological positions were: (1) that the individual is of no account and that it is only the social system that matters, and (2) that the organic analogy should be used. Both these points have often been rejected in American anthropology.

Radcliffe-Brown derived his concept of function from physiology. He believed that the term *function* in the social sciences meant the same process as in biology. A different way of putting this is to say that function is the contribution an element makes to the whole social system. The difference between Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski is, then, that Malinowski started with the individual, whereas individual needs were incidental to Radcliffe-Brown, who regarded the system of human interactions rather than human beings as being central in a functionalist approach to society.

Structure refers to a system of organized parts. These parts are individual persons who participate in social life, occupying statuses within the system. The social network is made up of social relationships between individuals of a society. The individual is in turn controlled by norms or patterns. Folklore's function is to maintain these norms and patterns. It is in his use of the concept of structure and its maintenance that Radcliffe-Brown made his major contribution to functionalism. His approach is markedly different than Durkheim's or Mauss's view.

The work of Durkheim has had a profound influence on the social sciences; his views on why and how society functions have become an integral part of our intellectual heritage. The main subject that preoccupied Durkheim on this topic throughout his life was that of social solidarity or cohesion. He wanted to understand, more than anything else, how a social unit holds its members together. He used concepts such as *organic solidarity* and *conscience collective* to address this issue.

In "The Division of Labor in Society" (1893), Durkheim concentrated on increased specialization of individuals as the key to social solidarity. Societies that have a great amount of specialization possess *organic solidarity*; each individual must work with others to survive. On the other hand, societies that have no differentiation of this type are held together by *mechanical solidarity*. Individuals in such societies have a strong sense of sharing common experiences, but cooperation with others is not necessary. What binds the group together is the cohesion of common experiences. Folklore is a very important part of this common experience, as every group and subgroup shares a folklore that helps cement the solidarity of the group. An aspect of this can be seen in internally undifferentiated occupational groups in contemporary culture where such groups have their own lore.

Later, Durkheim added another explication of social solidarity: that which centers around the conscience collective. The meaning of this phrase in English is something like “shared awareness” or “common understanding.” Society must be studied by studying *social facts*, which are parts of the shared awareness in a society. For Durkheim, social facts were what anthropologists understand to be culture. An example of this can be seen in the *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* in which Durkheim claimed that the totem, the sacred object, is a representation by which society symbolizes itself. The totem is the society rationalized through religion. Such a belief implies that a totem, like any other symbol, is a *collective representation*. This value is given to the representation by the society itself. This results in an epistemology that claims that individual knowledge results neither from the “mind” nor from the senses; rather, we know what we know because we learn socially devised “collective representations.” Folklore encompasses a group of these representations that comprise social knowledge and social facts. Durkheim contributed further on this topic with Marcel Mauss.

Two aspects of Mauss’s works that have had a major influence on social scientists are his analysis of gift giving and his analysis, with Durkheim, of “primitive” classifications. Mauss and Durkheim saw primitive classifications of categories of phenomena as being the first scientific classifications known to man—a view not very different from contemporary views about folk belief. They regarded such classificatory systems as systems of cognitive categories. The main function of these classifications was to make the relationship between phenomena understandable. As to gifts, Mauss recognized that gifts are obligatory and a part of a network of social obligations. In other words, gift giving and the repayment of gifts represent responsibilities within the social fabric that contribute to cohesion and social solidarity. The underlying importance of functional approaches for folklore studies is the theoretical contextualization of folklore materials within a conceptual framework that folklorists generally assume but do not attempt to cultivate. In this perspective, all folklore materials are a function of a human need, a social and structural necessity, or a device for social cohesion.

Functionalism—viewed as Malinowski’s biological and psychological given, Radcliffe-Brown’s interplay between the structures of society, and Durkheim and Mauss’s social cohesiveness or cultural matrix—provides folkloristics with a multifaceted theoretical matrix for any item in folklore.

Mark Glazer

See Also Anthropological Approach.

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G

Games, Folk

Play forms, usually with explicit rules, known to a particular group of people. Although artifacts recognizable as games have been among the archaeological finds of ancient Sumer, Egypt, Persia, Greece, Rome, and China, scholars continue to disagree over definitions of the genre. Games range from the covert, xeroxed visual riddles in office folklore, baby tickling styles, and adolescent courtship rituals to the large-scale painted games within urban graffiti and performances at public festivals.

Games are both observable and, simultaneously, inside the minds of the players. Perhaps the most profound paradox in game scholarship was framed by William Wells Newell, collector of children's folklore, who noted that players were simultaneously conservative and inventive with their games. Games are a solid and collectible—yet slippery and evolving—phenomenon.

The Study of Games by Elliot M. Avedon and Brian Sutton-Smith contains historical references for specific forms of games and traces the word *game* to its Indo-European root—*ghem*, meaning “to leap joyfully, to spring.” The study isolates the three most familiar usages for the word: first, “a form of play, amusement, recreation, sport, or frolic involving specific rules, sometimes utilizing a set of equipment, sometimes requiring skill, knowledge, and endurance”; second, “a condition of a leg, when someone is lame or injured and they limp”; and third, “wild animals, birds, or fish that are hunted for sport, or for use as food.” A game as folklore genre combines the notion of the form, condition, and object.

The prominence of rules in game definitions serves as the game's primary marker. Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky noted that in games, there are overt or revealed rules and concealed drama, whereas in other forms of play, there is revealed drama and concealed rules. As there are layers of rules to each game, one could argue, so there are layers of drama. Historically, the overt thematic dramas of the games were given research priority, with the emphasis on the game's spoken texts. Recently, it is the covert dramas that are being written about, with the emphasis on the game's symbolism and its connection to context and larger cultural patterns.

The more popular phenomena for game research have been: the verbal play of jump rope rhymes, singing games, ball-bouncing rhymes, and riddles; board games such as chess, backgammon, and Go; chasing and fighting games; and games focused on objects, such as string games and doll plays. Typically, in the

collections of games, the texts are of a specific genre cross-culturally, such as singing games, or of a particular genre prominent in one place, as in stylized ball play.

All games in active traditional circulation among players are considered folk games, yet some games are traditionally associated with certain peoples and often highlighted in game study, such as hunting games associated with a particular hunting-and-gathering culture. Even the highly regulated popular sport of basketball has its own folk variations, which themselves can be considered folk games. Although adults and children alike play games, the folklore literature has emphasized either the festival games of adults or the vast repertoires of the most prolific of game players—elementary-school-age children.

The most comprehensive cross-cultural collection of folk game studies to date is Helen Schwartzman's *Transformations: The Anthropology of Children's Play*. Cross-referenced by specific game genre and locale, this volume serves as an encyclopedia of game types and play lore, as well as a catalog of films on folk games. A reference book for both ethnographic and psychological studies, *Transformations* serves as a reminder that alongside the history of specific games, the study of games in general has had its own traditions.

The main thrust of much nineteenth- and mid-twentieth-century game lore research was directed to finding early, if not “original,” versions of games. There is a certain adventure in following a game's historical path as we trace chess, according to E. B. Tylor, from its likely start as an eighth-century Indian war game of *draughts*, through Persia and its acquisition of the name of the *shah* (or king), to the name's transformation to *schach*, *eschees*, and *chess*. There is romance in connecting the marital lyrics of girls' circle dances to biblical courtship rites, as Iona and Peter Opie have done, and mystery in postulating the possible meanings of the nonsense words of verbal play. This retrospective process sheds light on the history and the migration of the game, but it tells us little of what the games actually mean or meant to the human players.

Although histories of specific games were attempted in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, games were not collected formally in Europe until the 1800s, when folklore societies began to search for survivals of early cultural rituals and traditional forms that embodied national character. Pioneered by Alice Bertha Gomme in England, Scotland, and Ireland, and by William Wells Newell in the United States, the first collections of games were focused on region. Like the folk-tale or folksong, games were examined historically and geographically as artifacts from a passing time and initially were gathered through the sifting of a tremendous number of written sources. For example, François Rabelais' sixteenth-century French tale of *Gargantua and Pantagruel* contains perhaps the earliest categorization of folk games, thus making it a classic resource comparable to Pieter Breughel's sixteenth-century painting of Flemish village games, circa 1560.

In the mid-twentieth century, Iona and Peter Opie expanded upon the earlier, primarily literary tradition of game collection with their direct observations in *Children's Games in Street and Playground*. Like Newell, the Opies gathered and categorized texts of songs and games and printed them verbatim based upon field-notes. Musical notation was included in this as in earlier studies, but there was a great elaboration upon the comparative footnotes. Unlike the overt evolutionism of the nineteenth-century cross-cultural game histories represented by the work of E. B. Tylor, the works of the mid-twentieth century folklorists tended to emphasize one region in detail. Brian Sutton-Smith's *A History of Children's Play: The New Zealand Playground, 1840–1950* exemplified this later focus. His study further expanded upon the historical emphasis of earlier studies and introduced a new research technique: the collection of games by means of the methodology of oral history as well as through written documentation. In Sutton-Smith's work, the recording of individuals' game recollections gracefully demonstrated the significance of historical context in the development of the games themselves.

In the 1970s, Rivka Eifermann expanded upon the concept of geographic mapping developed in the earlier English works by surveying Israel's games and comparing groups of players and their games by age, game size, physical context, and ethnic variation. Unlike folklorists who conducted other psychological studies that had appeared around this time, studies in which the game was examined in order to understand some other process (e.g., cognition or moral judgment), Eifermann, like Sutton-Smith, examined the game as a cultural form. The assumption behind Eifermann's study was that the games, like other cultural phenomena, served some purpose: child training, subversive expression, or physical pleasure, for example. The study of games in their varying contexts could then reflect and legitimate the differing needs of the cultural communities in which the games were played.

The author of each of the classic works on games cited in the preceding passages attempted to categorize play forms in a particular way. The Opies categorized by motion: "chasing" versus "catching," or "seeking." For Newell, the categories were romance and survivalism: games of "love," "histories," and "mythology." Categorization by action in general becomes difficult since the same text may be a hand-clapping game in one area, a jump rope rhyme in another, and a verbal taunt in a third. Similarly, a soccer game may be played with a ball in one country but with bottle caps in another. Categorization by theme, on the one hand, provides too little latitude for textual variation and, on the other, allows too many opportunities for theoretical bias (e.g., game texts as "broken-down" myths). Sutton-Smith examined a century's worth of games in his ethnographic research and offered thematic patterns by era and indexed them by game name. The alphabetical approach of the Gomme collection was an attempt to avoid the classification problem by merely listing titles; however, even titles or first lines of games are subject to change. Asking the participants in a specific study for their

own terms and classification often proves to be the most useful approach, as we recognize that classification is in itself a game tradition, either imposed or brought out by the players themselves.

Games also have been classified by occasion, and this raises questions regarding the significance of spatial and temporal context in folk game research. Some games only appear during certain seasons, over certain holidays, and among certain age groups (e.g., snowball fights, April Fool's pranks on April 1, bobbing for apples at Halloween, and adolescent kissing games). Even these patterns will generally shift over time in any given place and across contexts.

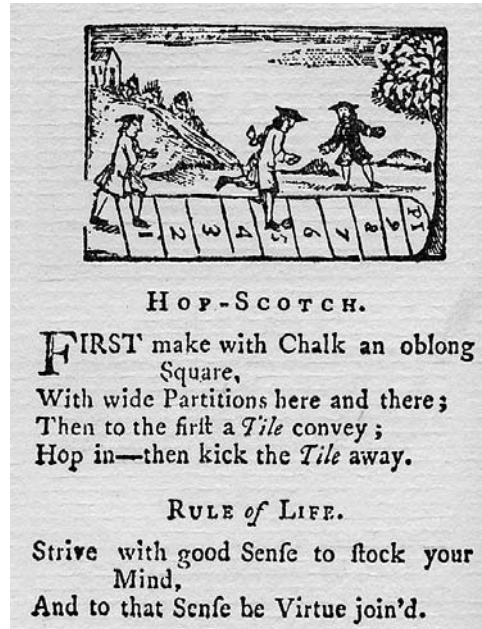
For Roger Caillois, in *Man, Play and Games*, there were four basic categorical elements in game play: *agon* (competition), *alea* (chance), *mimicry* (simulation), and *ilinx* (vertigo). Caillois' scheme remains a popular model among researchers, despite the fact that though many games emphasize one of these elements, most combine many. Categorizations, like any set of lenses, are useful in that they allow new ways of seeing phenomena, but categories also can serve as blinders as observations are placed into analytic boxes.

Dorothy Howard, in her introduction to Alice Bertha Gomme's collection *The Traditional Games of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, noted that methodologies of game research have to be examined in their own historical context. In the late nineteenth century, Lady Gomme was not allowed to watch the playing of the games she described, given her gender and nobility; therefore, her skills and interests had to be limited to the antiquarian's armchair. Collectors through the first half of the twentieth century, although utilizing direct observation and fieldnotes, could not capture as much detail as those who did fieldwork in the day of the audiotape player. Currently, with the availability of film and videotape, subtleties in the performance of games are recordable in a manner not possible a generation ago.

Pioneered by both anthropologists and psychologists in the 1940s and 1950s, the use of ethnographic film and video is both highly valued and underutilized in game study. *Trobriander Cricket: An Ingenious Response to Colonialism*, a 1973 film by Jerry Leach and Gary Kildea, was able to capture not only the formal game rule adaptation of the colonial game among Melanesian Trobriander tribes but also the joking, dancing, costumed midgame ceremonies that were their own play forms, parades, and parodies. *Pizza, Pizza, Daddy-O*, a 1969 film by Bess Lomax Hawes and Robert Eberlein, demonstrated the style, rhythm, formation, and mood of the singing games of African American girls in a manner not tenable on the written page.

As ethnographic methodology became more accepted and recording technology became more precise, the emphasis in game study shifted to the processes involved in the playing of the game. Based upon his ethnographic study of the Balinese cockfight, Clifford Geertz developed the notion of "deep play," a model in which the game serves as an icon for a culture's basic character. Geertz made the case for the significance of folk games in understanding the values of the larger culture, and by

Illustration of children playing hopscotch, 1744. (Newbery, John, *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book*, 1744)



doing so, he elevated the game's status from the peripheral to the central. B. Whitney Azoy's study *Buzkashi: Game and Power in Afghanistan* made a similar argument and expanded the anthropology of gaming to a book-length ethnography. For these researchers, the study of the game was synonymous with the study of the larger culture, and the games were stylized models of that society.

The variety of research on folk games ranges from sociological and geographical surveys to psychological small-group studies, from sociolinguistic studies of riddling and joking games to layered ethnographies of games and sports. In 1974, the Anthropological Association for the Study of Play formed and soon reorganized as the Association for the Study of Play in order to incorporate a diversity of disciplines involved in the study of folk games. The types of questions asked now vary almost as much as the forms of games themselves.

Work focusing on the highly studied, international game of hopscotch provides a useful example of the range of folk game research and also of the significance of audiovisual recording. Known in Australia as "hoppy," in New York City as "potsie," and in French Switzerland as "*la marelle*," hopscotch has a sizable but limited literature, in that the literature emphasizes almost exclusively the physical construction of the hopscotch form. In this slow-paced game of physical skill, each player typically tosses a marker, such as a stone, onto the chalked hopscotch board, which contains squares in a pattern, each with a number from 1 to 10 or more. Then, the players sequentially hop from square to square, alternately land on one foot and then two feet, and then attempt to pick up the stone without



Today, hopscotch continues to be an ever-popular playground game. (Anna Karwowska /Dreamstime.com)

falling. It is a competitive game in which the player who progresses the farthest, without erring in either tossing or hopping, wins.

Sometimes drawn in a spiral, sometimes as a large rectangle, and sometimes in a circle, the form itself varies and is the most discussed variation in the game literature. According to Newell, “This is one of the universal games, common from England to Hindostan.” He noted it was called “The Bell” in Italy and “The Temple” in Austria, and in Italy, the last three divisions of the chalk patterns are the *Inferno*, *Purgatoria*, and *Paradiso*. The Opies found English references to the game in eighteenth-century documents, and American folklorists Mary and Herbert Knapp claimed that a hopscotch diagram is still visible on the pavement of the Roman Forum. Yet all this description in the literature, although significant in our understanding of the game’s popularity in general, tells us nothing of how the game has actually been played. For this, we need real voices in transcription, stories about rules and the breaking of rules, and the ethnographic description of real times and places where real people get to play.

Among European American and African American girls in an urban elementary schoolyard in Pennsylvania, the folk variation lay not in the form or in the labels of the boxes but in the rules themselves. In one study, carried out in 1991–1992 by Ann Richman Beresin, children watched videotapes of themselves at play and gave their own commentary on game meaning, rules, and style, and on the interconnection between game rules and power. Since the form of their hopscotch was

a rectangle with a rounded top, numbered and drawn in paint by the elementary school officials, their folk variation was in the terminology and rule flexibility. For example, they used rules such as “walksies” and “no walksies” or “helpsies” and “no helpsies,” meaning forms of acceptable movement in the game. All of these stylized movements had to be “called” at the beginning of a game, and it was the calling that shaped the game. The fixing of the game in paint by the school officials, as opposed to the more-studied child-drawn chalk game, implicated larger historical trends visible in Western children’s folklore—namely, the subtle control exerted by adults over what had been a children’s domain. It can be said that the new rules invented by the children were a direct response to such control.

Nowhere in the English-language folk game literature are such rule variations examined, making one wonder how we can know a game without knowing the players or the plays. The variations have been skipped over in most collections—one could say, across the board. Audiovisual technology makes possible the expansion of questions about the game process, and the opportunity for observation over time, in one place, allows for the examining of larger cultural patterns related to the players, the school, and the larger society.

Descriptions of playful bodies and studies of their games, as in wrestling, chasing, stunts, or pranks, are still rare, due in part to the underutilization of audiovisual recording as a methodological tool and in part to the blinders of Western culture’s romanticism. Speech and rhyme have been given priority, even in the very physical games of rope jumping and hand clapping and ball bouncing. Large-scale ethnographic studies of game genres and game processes are needed, especially in this time of increased adult control over children’s play (particularly in Western culture) and emphasis on official sports and generalized rules.

Also underrepresented in the English-language literature are the games of non-Western countries and games of Western minorities. As Helen Schwartzman pointed out, in the early ethnographic reports of tribal cultures listed in the Human Relations Area Files, as well as in the modern psychological literature on minority groups, peoples mistakenly have been described as not having any games at all. The fallacy of such a notion lies in the complexity of fieldwork in unfamiliar cultures, the misdirection of the questions asked about play and games, the lack of time depth in most studies, and the secrecy often surrounding a folk group’s customs.

Another neglected area involves the pre- and postgame rituals that may be significant to the playing of the game itself. Rituals and minigames—such as the opening anthem before the ball game or the chanting and hand pointing of “Eeny, Meeny, Miny, Moe,” and the making of a tower of fists in “One Potato, Two Potato” as players set the terms of the game—often precede the full games and begin the competition, drama, or performance. Real players of real games can attest that the boundaries researchers have made around the games listed in books are often neat and artificial ones, as games often blend into one another or cross genres during play.

Seekers of information on other forms of folk games not readily found in the game text literature need to comb ethnographies of particular populations, daily life histories, and fictional and nonfictional films and narratives, as well as the treasures hidden in the related areas of folk gesture, folk drama, dance, and ritual. Students of adult festivals and observers of animal play will find games and a corresponding relevant literature in these areas as well. Many games are listed as songs, both in educational instructional publications as well as in ethnographic reports, and sometimes a game description can be found hidden behind the folk toy in a collection of material culture. For the most authoritative resource on folk games, one should seek out the players. Through incorporating their views, the folk game literature can be verified or challenged.

Anne Richman Beresin

See Also Children's Folklore; Toy, Folk.

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Gay (LGBTQ) Studies and Queer Theory

The study of orientation- and gender-variant people (popularly represented by gay and the acronym LGBTQ: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer), and a theoretical approach (queer theory) that considers their communities on their own terms. Recognizing the argument that “LGBTQ Studies” cannot properly be said to represent a discipline before the end of the twentieth century because the acronym LGBTQ had not yet been formulated, it is nevertheless useful to have consistent terms for studies of orientation/gender-variant people and gay-related issues since the late 1800s. LGBTQ, gay, and gay-related may therefore act as generalized monikers for the discipline and for the community, depending on context.

In 1869, Károly Mária Kertbeny first used the term *homosexualität* (homosexuality) in his writing opposing the German Confederation’s plan to adopt Prussia’s antisodomy law. Other opponents of such laws, including Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, K. F. O. Westphal, and Richard von Krafft-Ebing, proposed other, less-enduring terms to designate sexual acts and attraction between people of the same sex. Magnus Hirschfield founded the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee in Berlin in 1897 and established an extensive library of material pertaining to homosexuality. He eventually had to flee Germany; his collection was burned by the Nazis. These men, through their interest in the origins of homosexuality and their opposition to legislation against same-sex relations, laid the groundwork for what became the modern gay rights movement.

The early twentieth century saw the spread of homophile organizations to other parts of Europe and to the United States. Henry Gerber established the Society for Human Rights in Chicago in 1924. Activity declined during the years of the Great Depression, only to resume after World War II—perhaps encouraged by Alfred C. Kinsey’s monumental studies *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (1953). In response to Sen. Joseph McCarthy’s attempts to identify and prosecute homosexuals, Harry Hay founded the Mattachine Society in Los Angeles in 1950. Five years later, Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon organized the Daughters of Bilitis in San Francisco. These two groups sought acceptance for gay men and lesbians. Their respective journals, *One* and *The Ladder*, contain some of the earliest contributions to LGBTQ studies.

Emboldened by the social upheaval of the 1960s—the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War protests, the women’s movement, and the sexual revolution—homosexual people began to become more visible and to demand an end to discrimination based on sexual orientation. The fledgling gay liberation movement received a significant boost from the Stonewall Rebellion in 1969, 100 years after Kertbeny’s first published use of the term *homosexual*. Frustrated by police harassment, patrons of the Stonewall Inn in New York City’s Greenwich Village



Gay rights demonstration at the Democratic National Convention, New York City, on July 11, 1976. (Library of Congress)

fought back when the police raided the bar on June 28, 1969. The struggle continued for the rest of that month.

Seemingly overnight, gay organizations sprang up, including organizations solely for lesbians (there was a problem with sexism during the first years of gay liberation; even the term *gay* was too often assumed to refer to only men), and with them came a significant increase in the attention paid by scholars to homosexuality. The medical and psychological studies that had predominated in the field gave way to more ethnographic depictions of gay life published throughout the 1970s. The latest Kinsey studies documented a variety of lifestyles, embodied in the title of one of the volumes: *Homosexualities*.

In the 1980s, gay (LGBTQ) studies exploded. The existence of gay male, lesbian, bisexual, and trans culture—or cultures—became irrefutable. In 1980, one could have read virtually everything published in the field (usually called “gay and lesbian”); by 1990, however, one would have been hard pressed to read most of the titles on a single aspect of same-sex orientation and gender variance. Corey Creekmur and Alexander Doty’s 1995 *Out in Culture* included a twenty-four-page bibliography of publications on gay popular culture alone.

Although Christopher Isherwood made a foray into gay-related studies in *The World in the Evening* (1956) by mentioning camp—a prototypical gay sensibility—Susan Sontag might be credited with making the first theoretical contribution to the field with her 1964 essay “Notes on Camp.” (Camp is a style of humor that

inverts and subverts values, often by playing with stereotypes. It frequently has a serious edge, serving to mock heterosexual norms.) Several writers contributed articles on gay men's language to both popular magazines and scholarly journals during the 1960s and 1970s. Esther Newton's 1972 volume *Mother Camp: Female Impersonation in America* was a cultural anthropological study of drag queens. In 1982, Margaret Cruikshank released an anthology, *Lesbian Studies: Present and Future*. Michael Bronski, in his 1984 book *Culture Clash: The Making of Gay Sensibility*, documented the impact of Gay culture on popular culture. Another 1984 volume, Judy Grahn's *Another Mother Tongue: Gay Words, Gay Worlds*, offered an interesting but largely unsubstantiated speculation about the origins of gay traditional culture. Many homosexual people embraced Grahn's book because it proposed a gay mythos. The first book on gay men's folklore, Joseph P. Goodwin's *More Man than You'll Ever Be: Gay Folklore and Acculturation in Middle America*, appeared in 1989. In 1994, there was a special issue of *New York Folklore* entitled "Prejudice and Pride: Lesbian and Gay Traditions in America." Books on lesbian studies in the 1990s include *Lesbian Studies: Setting an Agenda* by Tamsin Wilton (1995), *Lesbian Subjects: A Feminist Studies Reader* by Martha Vicinus (1996), and *The New Lesbian Studies: Into the Twenty-First Century* (a follow-up to Cruikshank's 1982 volume).

As the field of LGBTQ studies has grown, the terminology has changed. "Homosexual" gave way to "gay," which in turn was expanded to "gay and lesbian." In the late 1980s, homosexual people increasingly began to appropriate the term "queer," which had been used as a tool of oppression for decades by the majority culture. Adapting the term as an emic concept (a name the community applied to itself) imbued it with pride, inverted it, denied the conflation of sex acts with homosexuality, pointed out the ridiculous aspects of the stereotypes the word referred to, and threw the term back into the faces of those who opposed equal rights for queers. But the word has a more mundane value, as well: It subsumes not only Gay and Lesbian identities (capitalized to signify identities-within-community nouns, such as national and religious nouns like "American" and "Buddhist"), but also Bisexual, Transsexual, and Transgendered (Transsexual and Transgender are also known together as Trans), offering a succinct term for several categories of outsiders. Queer is a subversive concept since it calls into question traditional gender roles and ideas of what constitutes appropriate behavior. The study of queer culture contradicts traditional notions of homosexuality as sin or illness. It documents the existence of a dynamic, widespread, living culture. ("Queer," however, has not been accepted by all, and "gay" is making a comeback as the default term, basically interchangeable with "LGBTQ.")

About 1990, "gay and lesbian studies" gave rise to "queer theory." Although not yet codified, queer theory has had a great impact on recent studies of LGBTQ culture. (Studies on the culture of bisexual and trans people only began to appear

in the mid-1990s.) Drawing from rhetoric and discourse, philosophy, deconstruction, postmodernism, rereadings of psychoanalytic theory, and especially feminist theory, queer theorists seek to reframe issues. The “white heterosexual male” is no longer the benchmark against which everything else is measured. Thus, gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans, and queer cultures are not defined in relationship to heterosexuality. Instead, they are documented and analyzed as inherently valid manifestations of ways of being.

One of the continuing debates in gay studies is whether homosexuality is innate (the essentialist point of view) or the result of social forces arising fairly recently (the social construction theory). Social constructionists maintain that sexuality takes its meaning from its culture, just as feminist theory holds that gender roles are socially constructed. To interpret homosexual acts in ancient Greece using contemporary American gay male culture as a frame of reference, therefore, is anachronistic. According to some proponents of this point of view, gay culture could not have existed until homosexuality was labeled in the nineteenth century. Michel Foucault has suggested that the beginning of the social construction of homosexuality can be traced to Westphal’s 1870 writing on “contrary sexual feelings.” On the other hand, all history is interpreted in terms of the present, and while sensitivity to anachronistic language is laudable, gay-related topics from the past are understood in accordance with current standards and labels such as “same-sex orientation” and “gender variance.” The challenge is to nevertheless point out the differences.

In covert novels and short stories written for homosexual people before Stone-wall (and even since), coding allowed the audience to read queerness into the texts. The readers were adept at deciphering ambiguous diction and esoteric symbols. In recent years, queer people have begun reading texts as queer even when the messages were not (consciously) encrypted by their authors. This kind of “cross-reading,” according to Creekmur and Doty in their introduction to *Out in Culture*, depends on camp. They explain the queer resonance that the movie *The Wizard of Oz* has for gay people by pointing out that almost everyone in the film lives a double life: “Its emotionally confused and oppressed teenage heroine longs for a world in which her inner desires can be expressed freely and fully. Dorothy finds this world in a Technicolor land ‘over the rainbow’ inhabited by a sissy lion, an artificial man who cannot stop crying, and a butch-femme couple of witches.”

Authors can invert coding as a subversive queer act. Michèle Aina Barale, in her essay in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, offered an example of a queer reading of a queer text. In considering Ann Bannon’s 1962 novel *Beebo Brinker* from a queer point of view, Barale demonstrated how a lesbian novel ostensibly written for heterosexual men is actually a subversive text that forces the straight male reader into a complicit acceptance of the homosexuality of the characters in the book.

Like words, appearances have been coded in gay culture. Various “types” have been common during the twentieth century. The most familiar types may be

the lesbian presentations of self as butch or femme (conforming to visual and sometimes behavioral stereotypes of masculine or feminine). Sue-Ellen Case, in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, used a study of the “butch-femme aesthetic” to support Teresa de Lauretis’s concept of a feminist subject, as distinct from a female subject. According to de Lauretis, the postmodern concept of the female subject is described in (and locked into) heterosexual terms and cannot escape from that ideology. The feminist subject (butch and femme lesbians in Case’s essay) is not restricted in this way. She can take action and move beyond heterosexual ideology.

Queer theory can challenge folklorists to question their assumptions and to look at their subject from new points of view. Although folklorists have traditionally worked with marginalized groups, people who are outside the official power structure, they are just beginning to explore the richness of LGBTQ culture; they have not even begun to consider the possibilities of bisexual and trans cultures, and of queer cultures as yet unnamed or unrecognized. If these groups are socially constructed, their cultures are perhaps just being born.

Joseph P. Goodwin and Mickey Weems

See Also Family Folklore; Feminist Perspectives on Folklore Scholarship; Gender; Women’s Folklore.

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Gender

Identification of a person as male or female according to culture-specific criteria. In everyday speech, the terms *sex* and *gender* tend to be employed interchangeably to indicate the aggregate of structural, functional, and behavioral differences that distinguish females and males from each other. Folklorists and other social scientists, however, draw a significant distinction between these two concepts. In their more precise terminology, *sex* denotes only those physiological and functional features that are direct manifestations of one's genetic endowment with two X chromosomes (female in humans) or one X and one Y chromosome (male in humans). *Gender*



We-Wa, a Zuni man dressed as a woman, weaving a belt on a waist loom with a reed heddle. (National Archives)

denotes that much larger body of behaviors, roles, and expectations that, although regarded by members of a society as appropriate only for members of one biological sex or the other, vary considerably across cultures and historical periods and hence must be culturally conditioned rather than biologically determined. Though it is common if not universal to make the male/female distinction the first and most crucial division among people, this does not mean that the concepts “woman” and “man” are universal categories since what it means to behave appropriately for one’s gender may be radically different in different societies.

In most if not all societies and cultural traditions, including the Euroamerican cultural and philosophical tradition from which the discipline of folklore emerged, those distinct roles seen as proper for men and women are believed to be natural, that is, biologically determined and/or divinely ordained. These roles are not only in specifically sexual activity but also in work, family, religion, government, recreation, expressive culture, and other aspects of social interaction. A gender perspective decouples the biological structure and function of the male or female body from the behaviors, feelings, and roles deemed appropriate to that body. Thus, a gender-informed perspective is often linked with a critical feminist philosophy that seeks to free women from the (generally devalued and limited) social roles to which they were formerly restricted, although the study of how to be a (cultural) man is as significant as, if less common than, the study of how to be a (cultural) woman. The study of gender likewise implicates the study of sexuality since the structure/behavior decoupling fundamental to this perspective argues that even the apparently inevitable roles within intimate sexual relationships and an individual’s sexual attraction to persons of the same or opposite gender are substantially influenced by cultural attitudes. A gender-informed approach to folklore thus has strong connections to gay and lesbian theory and serves as a counterbalance to psychoanalytic approaches to the extent that they posit universal and distinct psychosexual developmental pathways for women and men.

Both biology and culture may contribute to those behaviors seen as gender specific, but it is rarely possible to determine the exact extent of their relative contributions. Empirical research and philosophical debate continue. The crucial contribution of a gender perspective is to recognize that there is a separation, not a complete congruence, between biological and cultural factors and that consequently the question must always be asked about the extent and nature of possible connections between them. This inherently cultural-constructivist perspective also makes it clear that the very perception of a characteristic as natural, biological, or hormonal can itself be a social expectation. For example, those societies that attribute greater aggressiveness to males may perceive aggression as an essential, hormonally determined male trait, but other cultures see aggressiveness and the willingness to fight fiercely (usually to protect the young rather than to acquire territory) as an essential female trait.

The study of gender in folklore has historical roots extending back as far as the 1920s. Mark Azadovskii's work revealing the influence of gender on tale-tellers' repertoire and performance choices (1926) and Margaret Mead's comparative study documenting extreme cultural variability in gender roles in tribal societies (1935) presaged issues still being considered today. Simone de Beauvoir's philosophical exploration of the way women have been defined as "not man" (1953) was particularly important in sparking the political feminism of the 1960s and the explosion of feminist scholarship in folklore as well as other disciplines in the 1970s and 1980s. Works by Carol Gilligan and the multiple authors of *Women's Ways of Knowing* further elaborated the groundwork of the gender perspective, arguing that women in Euroamerican cultures have been culturally conditioned to have fundamentally different (but not deficient) ways of understanding and responding intellectually and ethically to the world. The constructivist position on gender is closely tied to the de-privileging of authoritative discourses and decentering of the unitary subject central to deconstruction and poststructuralism. This perspective is also entirely congruent with the movements within folklore that stressed the value of contextual interpretation, with the role folklore plays in communication between persons who identify with distinct and even hostile groups as well as within homogenous folk groups (differential identity), and with the dialogic construction of identity through aesthetic expression—that is, with the paradigms of the contextual/performance revolution in folklore theory of the 1970s and 1980s. Significantly, however, gender was not taken into account in the original formulation of these theories. Feminist critics have had to note the telling omission and argue for the essential place of gender in approaches to folklore study that rely upon a problematized notion of personal identity and group membership.

A gender-informed perspective also has shaped both topical and methodological considerations in the study of folklore. In terms of topic, perceiving gender as a cultural construct has prompted the realization that gender roles and identities are themselves traditional forms of expressive communication, that is, they are social, aesthetic accomplishments and forms of folklore in their own right. Groups defined by gender and/or sexual orientation are appreciated as significant folk groups with their own lore, practices, and types of group-internal and group-external communication. New genres and new perspectives on genre have emerged as folklorists realized that one's practice as a narrator, humorist, craftsperson, singer, or performer/creator of any type is likely to be influenced by one's gender and one's responses to gender norms in one's society. An awareness that gays and lesbians as well as heterosexual women have been defined primarily in terms of absences and deficiencies (in contrast to heterosexual male practice, silently accepted as the human norm) has prompted explorations of the positive qualities of the expressive skills practiced within these groups. Conversely, folklorists now recognize that gender must be taken into account as a source of potential difference within

families and ethnic or racial groups formerly treated as homogeneous. The recognition of cross-cultural, cross-racial, cross-class, and historical variation in definitions of gender also deflects feminist folkloristics from the attractions of essentialism, counterbalancing the disposition to identify universal “women’s styles” or “women’s experiences.”

In terms of fieldwork methodology, a gender-informed perspective has been one of the theoretical approaches most influential in overturning formerly dominant concepts of objectivity in research. Feminist folklore scholars (following the critical work of Evelyn Fox Keller and Sandra Harding in the natural and social sciences, respectively) argue that the valorization of objectivity and distance in ethnographic research has been a way of privileging a conventionally male interaction style. Current practice recognizes that the self does not have to be defined by separation from the other and that empathic and participatory ways of understanding the ethnographic subject are as valid as an objectifying, purely intellectual approach. While insisting that gender identity is variable and changeable, this perspective recognizes that the researcher’s effective or perceived gender identity and sexual identity have a profound effect on fieldwork. One’s own perceptions and experiences (including the lived experience of gender and sexual orientation) will necessarily influence what issues are important to the researcher and hence not only what questions one asks but also what one sees and hears in the course of complex aesthetic communicative events. Gender identity also influences access: Who the researcher is perceived to be will have an effect on how people make sense of that individual, what they think they should talk to her or him about, and hence what she or he learns about a culture or situation. Ethnographers need to learn to capitalize on the opportunities afforded by gender. Particularly for stigmatized groups—gay and lesbian communities as well as heterosexual women—many communicative activities are intentionally coded to avoid exposure. Thus, potential informants are likely to be willing to reveal themselves and share lore only with those who share their gender or sexual identity or who demonstrate that they are sympathetic. A shared gender identification may also be crucial in enabling the researcher to make sense of cues or to interpret communicative forms properly. A complete commonality between researcher and informant on the basis only of shared gender should not be assumed, however, given the variation within gender definitions.

In studying folklore through the lens of gender or studying gender by means of its expression in folklore, a constant tension exists between constructivist and essentialist tendencies. The role of ethnographic and empirical work in the social sciences (in contrast to philosophical and psychoanalytically informed theories) is to document actual cultural, racial, and class variation in gender roles, practices, and expectations. Nevertheless, given the logical explanatory connections between observed expressive forms and common gender-based activities (for example, between intentionally interruptible narrative styles employed by women and the

demands of child care), it can be a tempting act of gender solidarity to generalize. Furthermore, it appears that, in practice, each person (researcher or subject) must essentialize to some extent, concluding that some ways of being or behaving are crucial to his or her identity as a gendered subject. To the extent that a gender perspective is allied with feminist theories advocating transcendence of the Cartesian mind/body split, this approach recognizes that a person's sense of self depends upon the experience of living in a particular (gendered) body with particular qualities and capabilities—although all “experience,” even bodily experience, must be seen (from an Althusserian perspective) as ideologically informed and thus culturally constructed. One solution, advocated by Diana Fuss, argues that essentialism is implicated even within the most critical constructivism. A cultural-constructivist position replaces the idea of an essential natural, biological human gender identity with the concept of gender as necessarily (essentially) created through social interaction.

Patricia E. Sawin

See Also Family Folklore; Feminist Perspectives on Folklore Scholarship; Gay (LGBTQ) Studies and Queer Theory.

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Genre

A French word, from the Latin *genus*, used to describe a basic concept in literary theory and criticism, variably termed *form*, *kind*, or *type*, depending upon the period and the theory. Plato (*The Republic*) distinguishes, in the arts of the rhapsody between narration, imitation, and the mixture of the two, while considering the art of the actor essentially mimetic. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle differentiates narrative epic poetry from the imitative action of drama. The basic triad of generic categories—the epic, the dramatic, and the lyrical—is a Renaissance formulation that has remained viable in literary discourse up to the present. From the inception of folklore scholarship, the definitions of specific genres—the *Märchen*, the *Sage*, the legend, the ballad, the proverb, the riddle, the fable, and many others—have forged the genre as a principle concept of the discipline. Referring particularly to its literary renditions, Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744–1803) compares the *Märchen* with the *Romane* (romance, novel), considering the former to be not just a genre but also an entity that possess a spiritual quality that permeates other literary forms. Jacob (1785–1863) and Wilhelm (1786–1859) Grimm’s assertion that “the fairy tale is more poetic, the legend is more historical” remains the cornerstone of many analyses of folk narrative.

Such descriptive definitions, which project the writer’s own attitude, emotions, and response to the text, have failed to provide the precision in generic distinctions that is necessary for systematic research. To complicate matters, genre terms are words in ordinary languages, subject to ambiguity, vagueness, synonymy, and historical changes. The attempt to employ them with analytic precision inevitably has been burdened by their semantic history in multiple languages. Comparative analysis has addressed the problems of differing cultural perspectives, attitudes, and belief systems that have made the construction of an analytical system of genres even more difficult.

Faced with such complex systems of generic distinctions, folklorists have taken two distinct directions in their attempts to resolve the indefiniteness of folklore genres and the concept of genre in folklore. The first approach seeks ways to overcome these difficulties and to construct the concept of genre as a

category of analytical classification; the second proposes to explore the difficulties and to conceive of genre as a category of cultural discourse.

Genre as a Category of Analytical Classification

The viability of any classification system lies in its relationship to the reality of the information it stores. The system has to correspond not only to a logical order of things but also to the reality of the information in material, biological, and social life. Therefore, the formulation of a classification system of folklore genres requires a theoretical explanation that will establish its relationship to the literary-visual history, cultural use, and artistic creativity of folklore forms. Within folklore scholarship, it is possible to delineate two basic theories that answer that need, albeit from two opposing points of view. These are the theory of primary forms and the theory of ideal types.

The theory of primary forms initially was advanced by André Jolles, though it is not exclusive to his writings. The primary forms are the first verbal manifestations of human cognition that crystallize around specific semantic domains. According to Jolles, folklore forms are universal and have been known throughout history and in all cultures, though they may take different literary representations. The semantic domain of the holy manifests itself in the legend, and that of the family is manifest in the *Sage*; the nature of the creation of the universe is shown in myth; and the principle of inquiry is expressed in riddles. Proverbs represent experience, and the *Kasus* ethics. The concern with factuality crystallizes in the *Memorable*, as naive morality does in the *Märchen*. The comic spirit finds venue in jokes. These are the elemental forms of human creativity that have the potential to evolve, multiply, and transform as society changes and moves from orality to literacy. At the basis of the generic categories, there are, hence, semantic domains that persist as elementary forms that permeate later and technically more advanced forms and means of expression. Kurt Ranke proposes to substitute psychological-spiritual needs for Jolles's semantic domains. It is the function of different genres to fulfill these needs. Accordingly, the *Märchen* function to express human aspirations for a higher order of justice, the *Sage* manifests resignation in the face of worldly tribulations, and myth expresses human needs to mediate between the known and unknown. The theory of primary forms assumes the universality of folklore genres since they are generated either by cognitive semantic domains of language or by psychological-spiritual needs that are fundamental to human beings in all societies and cultures. Therefore, as analytical categories of classification, genres have their roots in human categories of thought and language.

The theory of ideal types, which draws on a fundamental concept of Max Weber, considers genres as heuristic constructs that reflect the reality of folklore

forms by approximation only. Lauri Honko, who has been the principal proponent of this theory, considers genres to be distinct configurations of contents, form, style, structure, function, frequency, distribution, age, and origin. Each genre is a construct category that involves an ideal configuration and criteria that are appropriate for each form. No single folktale, ballad, legend, or proverb, to use some common folklore forms as examples, has to meet all the standards of its ideal types; it can and need only approximate them. Genres are, hence, classificatory categories that involve not one but several distinctive features, and it is the task of researchers to determine the relations between the category and the texts that people narrate, sing, or utter in society. A failure to establish such a relation may be indicative of the formation of a new genre, the criteria of which require formulation. Honko himself has not outlined a systematic scheme of folklore genres as ideal types, but others have, even though they do not refer explicitly to Honko’s theoretical formulation.

Limiting himself to the three basic forms in prose narrative—myth, legend, and folktale—and summarizing the scholarly consensus of his time, William Bascom proposes the following generic configuration:

Form	Belief	Time	Place	Attitude	Principal Characters
Myth	Fact	Remote past	Different world: other or earlier	Sacred	Nonhuman
Legend	Fact	Recent past	World of today	Secular or sacred	Human
Folktale	Fiction	Any time	Any place	Secular	Human or nonhuman

Bascom, William R. 1965. The Forms of Folklore: Prose Narratives. *Journal of American Folklore* 78:3 20.

Scott Littleton adds *history* and *sacred history* to the genres he considers, positioning them on a grid of two polarities: the fabulous and the factual, the secular and the sacred. As the configuration between these four components changes, historically and culturally, the narration of a particular theme moves from one ideal generic pattern to another. In this scheme of analytical categories, folktale is fabulous and secular, myth is fabulous and sacred, history is factual and secular, and sacred history is sacred by definition and factual. The legend occupies a central position in relation to all four factors.

Heda Jason and Roger Abrahams, respectively, propose two of the most comprehensive schemes for the classification of folklore genres. Jason employs, first,

a five-part classification system of modes: the realistic, the fabulous, the numinous, the marvelous, and the symbolic. These modes then manifest themselves in the realistic, fabulous, and symbolic genres of folklore. In her descriptions of specific genres, Jason retains theme, time, space, structure, and function as terms of analysis. Abrahams, on the other hand, extends the classificatory principles to account for the rhetoric of folklore and its social interaction. Consequently, he divides all folklore genres into three major groups: conversational genres, play genres, and fictive genres. In his scheme, it is not only the genre itself that is an analytical category. He constructs a graded scale between two polarities of interpersonal involvement and detachment (his term is *removal*). Each genre, not each text of each genre, relates to these two extreme configurations by approximation. In turn, each performance of each text may have its own position on the generic arch that Abrahams constructs.

The theories of primary forms and ideal types assume the universality of folklore genres, and in their applications to the available classificatory models, they provide for variation, modification, change, and transformation that are inherent in the social dynamics of folklore.

Genres as a Category of Cultural Discourse

The idea of genre as a category of cultural discourse involves a different set of assumptions, problems, and research goals. First, the universals are not the genres themselves but the division of speech into different forms. In every society, speakers divide their speech into categories that they perceive and name. Apparently, there are a few recurrent principles that are universal: The idea of truth distinguishes facts from fiction, the perception of rhythm separates poetry from prose, and the ability to use tropes in language differentiates between figurative and nonfigurative language. Taking these features as given, genres of discourse become subject to specific inquiries of cultural cognition, linguistic representation, and performance. Speakers in every language name or label by other means the genres they use. These names or signs reflect the cultural taxonomy of speech, representing the features the speakers consider most distinctive in their forms of folklore. They constitute a system of local knowledge of rhetoric and speech making, a theory coded in generic names and practices.

Second, since a universal and scientific classification system becomes irrelevant to the exploration of genres as categories of cultural discourse, the identification of a particular text in terms of a preformulated system of pigeonholes becomes methodologically irrelevant as well. The inquiry into the nature of folklore genres shifts from a deductive to an inductive method, exploring the use and performance of the genres in society through the formulation of their forms and structures, their conception within the cultural cosmology, the rules and principles

for their performance, and the textual and social interrelations between the genres themselves.

Morphological-structural analysis explores generic discourse on a semantic, dramatic, or metaphoric level. The sequence of episodes in a narrative—the relationship between actions, characters, objects, or other symbols, whether in a tale, a legend, a ballad, or an epic—constitutes a dimension of the generic discourse that distinguishes one genre from another in specific societies. Morphological-structural relations serve as the generic grammar of folklore forms. Speakers, narrators, and singers—though they may not be able to formulate the grammar—have the ability to be aware of that grammar. Therefore, such an analysis becomes an essential part of the ethnography of folklore genres. Although morphological-structural analysis originally purported to advance definitions of folklore genres, assuming them to have similar patterns in all traditions, it is possible to modify this methodology in order to examine the ethnic genres of specific traditions.

In many societies, the generic system amounts to a complex set of relations between folklore forms, which their speakers relate to other domains of social life, such as religion and politics. As people establish connections between their speech genres and their ideas about their world, they establish a cosmology of speech that includes ideas about the creation of speech in general and certain genres in particular. They place religious value on traditional genres of prayers, invocations, and ritual songs and consider other forms of speech as mundane, profane, or ordinary. There are narratives that account not only for the creation of speech but also for its different forms and stories about great orators and singers who excelled in delivering one genre or another. Such a “mythology of folklore genres” is an essential aspect of genres of discourse because it provides the basis for the use of such genres in society as rooted in cultural ideology.

The pragmatic exploration of ethnic genres requires an examination of their names, their cultural taxonomies, and their performances in social life. Their names reflect their cultural conception and significance, their history in tradition, and their import and function as their speakers view them. Their taxonomies underscore their relations to each other in terms of their prosodic features, the spaces and times of their performances, and their association with particular segments of society. Their performances are the basis for any analysis of the poetics of folklore genres, the use of formulas and frames, the alteration between prose and poetry, and the use of any genres of speech within or in relation to other genres of speech.

There is not a necessary and exclusive direct correspondence between genres and events as cultural categories of folklore. A single cultural event is often the occasion for the performance of several genres. The rules that dictate which genres are appropriate for which occasions are part of the cultural conventions. Similarly, a single genre may include other culturally recognized genres. Tales often include songs, epics include other tales as well as proverbs and riddles, and proverbs and

riddles, when performed by themselves, may allude to tales and songs, thus semantically including themes known in different genres. Such combinations do not necessarily imply neglecting the principles of genres but rather an artistic and often playful use of these cultural categories of discourse.

Dan Ben-Amos

See Also Aesthetics; Ethnoaesthetics; Ethnopoetics; Linguistic Approach; Literary Approach; Text.

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Gesture

Movement of the body, including the face, that expresses an idea or emotion. The study of such movement, called kinesics, has a place in several disciplines concerned with human communication, especially linguistics, psychology, anthropology, and ethnology. Folkloristic interest in gestures, though drawing from these branches of study, has focused in two particular directions: on body movements and facial expressions that contribute to the articulation of verbal and material folklore forms—that is, gestures that contribute to the paralinguistics of folklore performance—and on movements that have traditional meaning in their own right. Although recognizing that every movement means something either latently or overtly, folklorists have concentrated primarily on those gestures that are conscious and traditional.

One major category of gestures studied by folklorists is that known as emblems. These gestures have a direct verbal translation, generally known throughout the folk community. Performers use them with the conscious intent of sending a specific message, particularly when such factors as distance or poor acoustics have made verbal communication impractical. Emblems may stand on their own, without any verbalization. One of the simplest emblems used in various cultures is nodding one's head to signal either the affirmative or the negative. Waving upon greeting or upon leave-taking is another widely known emblem. Other familiar examples of gestures that function as emblems are “the bird,” the upraised middle finger used as an insult, and a shrug of the shoulders, suggesting the gesturer's ignorance of the subject under consideration.

In some traditional contexts, especially occupations in which the noise of heavy machinery may drown out speech, systems of emblems may develop to enable workers to communicate with one another. Two gestural systems relying on emblems that have elicited folkloristic interest are the sign language used for intercultural communication among Native Americans and American Sign Language, used by the hearing- and speech-impaired. The latter, in fact, offers a method for communicating folklore forms circulated orally in other performance situations.

Illustrators are the other major category of gestures that folklorists study. Gestures that are designated as illustrators are clearly linked to another mode of communication, usually speech, and occur when spoken words need amplification or clarification. Speakers may use illustrators to indicate the size and shape of an object, to designate a direction, to emphasize a point being made, or to enumerate related elements in a discourse. A fisher, for example, may demonstrate the length of “the one that got away” by holding his or her open palms the appropriate distance apart; a pointed finger may indicate the road to be taken when someone verbally gives directions; a storyteller can suggest the suddenness of the protagonist’s escape from a threatening revenant with a snap of the fingers; and a homilist may differentiate the points in a sermon by ticking them off one by one on the fingers. Some performers of folklore may become associated with a particular illustrator. African American storyteller James Douglas Suggs, whose performances were reported by Richard M. Dorson, characteristically depicted the hasty departure of a character by slapping his hands together and then sliding one quickly off the other. Ozark ballad singer Almeda Riddle became associated with the circles she made with each hand to maintain the tempo as she sang.

Folklorists also may have some interest in the category of gestures known as regulators, those gestures that help to guide the flow of verbal interaction by signaling beginnings and ends of discourse, topic shifts, or turns at speaking. Nodding, pointing, or changing facial expression or posture may serve such purposes.

Few studies focusing exclusively on gestures have appeared in the literature of folklore studies, though most fieldworkers recognize the necessity of recording and reporting gestures that they observe during verbal performances. The most extensive study of a single gesture, using the historic-geographic method, is Archer Taylor’s examination of the “shanghai gesture” (known by other folk names), an emblem of insult in which the thumb is touched to the nose and the fingers are wagged. Other gesture studies by folklorists take a more ethnographic approach and examine gesture use in particular contexts. For example, a study of two gestures, cutting one’s eyes to indicate disapproval and sucking the teeth to signal anger, suggests their African origins, but the study focuses principally upon the gestures’ context-dependent meanings and usages among African Americans in the West Indies and the United States.

Potential approaches to the study of gestures by folklorists include examining the role gestures play in affirming group identity. The signing used by urban gangs exemplifies this role of gestures, as does the use of secret handshakes by members of clubs and other organizations. Gestures may be overt signs of group identity based on religion (for example, crossing oneself), ethnicity (the Black Power salute and handshake), or voluntary association (the Boy Scout sign).

Folklorists also may concentrate on how gestures complement or replace other forms of communication. When an infielder in a baseball game raises the first and little fingers to indicate to outfielders that two players on the opposing side have made outs, he uses that particular gesture because verbal communication may be hampered by distance and crowd noise. Furthermore, raising the first and second fingers might not be as easily distinguishable as the gesture he uses.

Folklorists also may note the culture-specific meaning of gestures that appear to be identical but actually have different meanings. The gesture used by the infielder to mean “two outs,” for example, closely resembles the gesture of the “horns,” which has both insulting and prophylactic significance in Mediterranean cultures and their extensions in the Western Hemisphere. When directed at a married man, the horns emblem suggests that his wife is being unfaithful, that he is a cuckold. When directed in response to a compliment made by someone whose intentions may be suspect, the same gesture wards off the evil eye. Sports fans in the U.S. Southwest recognize the gesture as a spirit-rouser for supporters of the University of Texas athletic teams, who are known as Longhorns. Another gesture that has multiple meanings is the upraised first and middle fingers held slightly apart. This may simply mean the number two, but it also has significance because of its resemblance to the letter “v.” Associated with Winston Churchill, the British prime minister during World War II, the gesture has come to stand for “victory.” During the antiwar movement of the 1960s in the United States, the gesture came to represent peace and, in fact, became an integrative device among members of the counterculture for whom its significance extended to a range of activities associated with their lifestyle.

In addition to examining how gestures are used by storytellers and other verbal artists, folklorists should look at gesture usage in such contexts as traditional ritual, where the exact way in which something is done (for example, whether the right or left hand is used) may affect the efficacy of the procedure. Moreover, gestures frequently constitute important features of games, dances, and dramatic performances.

One hindrance to the study of gestures has been the failure to develop a simple, uniform system to record them. Although some folklorists have tried to use methods based loosely upon systems such as that developed by Rudolf Laban for transferring body movement to the printed page, most have found Laban notation too cumbersome and have opted for verbal descriptions of the gestures. When the gestures are part of the performance of some other kind of folklore, transcribers

may have difficulty integrating them into the text of the performance. General comments about body language in a performance note may substitute for precise indication of which gestures appeared at what precise point in the performance.

William M. Clements

See Also Frame; Performance.

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Gesunkenes Kulturgut

The idea that noteworthy cultural materials originated among the elite (or upper stratum of society) and subsequently descended to (were copied by) the lower stratum, or folk. A movement in the opposite direction is termed *gehobenes Kulturgut* (elevated culture materials). If the process involves social groups at various levels within the same presumed evolutionary stage, it may not be labeled as evolution or devolution.

The term *gesunkenes Kulturgut* was coined by the German Hans Naumann at the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1902, Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer suggested that folktales did not spring from a particular social class present in all societies, contrary to the views of romantic nationalism. He further postulated: “The folk do not produce, they re-produce.” Naumann—who had espoused

(in company with other folklorists such as Arnold van Gennep and Pierre Saint-yves) the view that folklore originated in primitive rituals—embraced this new argument and developed it into a theory. His new postulate credited the origin of folklore to a socially superior *Oberschicht* (upper stratum, intelligentsia), whose creative responses were borrowed, copied, or imitated by the socially inferior *Unterschicht* (lower stratum, peasantry, folk). From a psychological standpoint, although the process was one of “matched dependent behavior,” the behavior of the model (the *Oberschicht*) degenerated into folklore in the course of being acquired and reproduced by the *Unterschicht*. These folkloric responses of the *Unterschicht* were degenerated imitations of the original *Oberschicht* models because they were garbled and because they reflected the ignorance and misunderstanding of the unsophisticated *Unterschicht*. Naumann called the product of what was adopted from the *Oberschicht* models *gesunkenes Kulturgut*.

The arguments of Naumann, Hoffmann-Krayer, and others who viewed folklore in nationalistic terms were later incorporated into Nazi political ideology. Thus, what began as an academic, sociological, and anthropological thesis became fundamental to the development of the extreme nationalistic *Herrenvolk* (master race) ideology. The roots of this doctrine lie deep in German political theory and practice, backed by the firm beliefs that racial and folk ideals are basic to the state and that intense nationalism is an important means of survival.

In their search for the spiritual and national ancestry of the German peoples, Nazi folklorists adopted this view. Thus, the theory of the *Herrenvolk* became synonymous with the earlier concepts of the leading, higher, or formative social strata of a population—respectively, the *Führerschicht*, *Oberschicht*, and *Bildungsschicht*. All of these strata were thought to have served as models for the imitative behavior of lower, less gifted social groups or nations.

Thus, the first step toward a theory of imitative learning in culture was introduced by folklorists at the beginning of the twentieth century but never gained popularity because it was used by political ideologists as a scientific justification for extreme nationalism. The defeat of the ideology doomed the theory as well. With the violent downfall of the Nazi regime, Naumann’s theory became debased, and the concept of imitative learning in culture was aborted.

Another form of *gesunkenes Kulturgut* is that designated in the idea of the deterioration of higher forms of cultural expressions into lesser forms. Within the realm of verse (poetry-song), this phenomenon was labeled *Zersingen* (to sing to pieces) by Friedrich von Schlegel (1772–1829)—a philologist and ideologue of German romanticism. He postulated that folksongs are formulated by a process of deterioration through transmission, whereby sophisticated poems are unwittingly rendered into songs. This hypothesis was accepted by folk narrative scholar Albert Wesselski, who was convinced that only through writing, a higher level of culture, could narrative survive. Wesselski sought to use Schlegel’s postulate in

order to discredit Walter Anderson's theory that attributed the stability of folktales to oral transmission and audience.

The turbulent career of Naumann's imitative-degenerative theory concerning the acquisition of folkloric responses by the *Unterschicht* from the *Oberschicht* created a hostile attitude toward the mere discussion of such a learning process. Ironically, a similar theory proposed by Lord Raglan remains little known in European folklore circles because it did not acquire the political notoriety of Naumann's theory. Without referring to any specific race, nation, or social class, Raglan formulated a theory of the ritualistic origin of folklore. According to Raglan, the origins of narrative genres are to be sought in ancient, dramatic "royal ritual," developed and phrased by the royal and priestly classes. This ritual drama was imitated by the masses (lower classes), who were too unsophisticated to understand its meaning, and through an evolving process of degeneration, the ritual drama reached its present state as folklore. Thus, epic, legend, myth, and folktale were invented by an upper class and imitated by a lower class, which rendered them into their present forms.

Raglan argued that the invention of such genres could not be credited to "peasants" and "savages" (his labels for nonliterate peoples). "No popular story-teller has ever been known to invent anything," Raglan asserted, and "the peasant and the savage, though they are great hands at making up stories, are nevertheless incapable of making up the simplest story of the doings of ordinary human beings."

Raglan's theory implies that creative imagination is a sophisticated phenomenon found only among the upper classes and that the peasant and savage or illiterate possesses only "memory [which] is more or less retentive, but will add nothing to his or anyone else's ideas since it can invent nothing." Thus, the peasant and savage or illiterate merely imitates and distorts, responding negatively, and is unable to create anything himself.

In summary, Raglan's theory of the imitative learning of folkloric responses from superior classes is almost identical to Hans Naumann's. Raglan merely spoke in general terms of royalty and peasantry, whereas Naumann's theory described European *Oberschicht* and *Unterschicht*, which would later be interpreted as definite *Führerschicht* (leader stratum; as opposed to the ignorant masses) and German *Herrenvolk* (in contrast to inferior races).

At the close of the twentieth century, the concept of or belief in the principle of sunken culture materials saw a political renaissance. The argument that culture and its institutions (economic, political) flow from the upper strata of society down to the lower strata and that the lower strata benefit from the upper's riches (possessions) became a viable theory (ideology) and social program (policy) attributed to the Republican Party in the United States. In the parlance of contemporary economic theory, it is referred to as "trickle-down economics" or "Reaganomics."

Hasan El-Shamy

See Also Audience; Context; Psychological Approach.

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Giants

Monstrous supernatural beings in Scandinavian mythology; also, the subject of local legend throughout medieval Europe, represented in medieval pageants, and appearing in many medieval romances and more recent folktales.

The fullest picture of giants in northern mythology is found in Old Norse literature. In the mythological poems of the Icelandic *Poetic Edda*, they are in conflict with the gods and are represented as an older race of beings, who know of the beginning of the worlds. Even Odin, wisest of the gods, consulted the giant Vafthrudnir when he wished to discover hidden knowledge. In the thirteenth-century *Prose Edda* of Snorri Sturluson, the world was said to have been formed from the body of an ancient giant, Ymir, from whom both giants and gods were descended after he was slain by the creator gods.

The giants, who dwelt in Jötunheim (literally, Giant World), were dangerous neighbors to the gods in Asgard, and Frigg warned her husband against making a visit to Vafthrudnir, because if Odin could not outdo the giant in a riddle contest he could be destroyed. The enmity between gods and giants was like that between gods and Titans in the mythology of ancient Greece, and Thor, with his



Jack the Giant Killer falls asleep, illustrated by Maginel Wright Enright. (Tweed, Anna, ed. *Fairy Tales Everyone Should Know*, 1920)

mighty hammer and power over the lightning, defended the gods from the threat of cold, darkness, and sterility.

The giants are sometimes called “frost giants.” Their aim was to carry away Freyja, goddess of fertility, as well as the golden apples that gave the gods perpetual youth, and the sun and moon, thereby causing the return of chaos. Surviving myths show the constant threat the giants posed to the gods. They sought to obtain Thor’s hammer, the weapon they feared most, or else to lure him unarmed into Jötunheim. One giant, Hrungnir, made his way into Asgard, but was slain by Thor in a duel. Another giant built a wall around Asgard, but demanded Freyja and the sun and moon as payment, so Loki prevented him from completing his work, and he was slain.

Myths recounting Thor’s, Odin’s, or Loki’s entrance to the realm of the giants are found in some of the earliest surviving poems from pre-Christian Iceland, and some are illustrated in carvings considerably older than the literary sources. One such journey, ending with the battering to death of the giant Geirröd and his two daughters after they attempted to destroy Thor, was known to Saxo Grammaticus, the thirteenth-century Danish historian.

A long comic tale of about the same date in the *Prose Edda* relates how Thor was humiliated when he visited the hall of the huge giant Utgard-Loki, skilled in deceptive magic. Thor only discovered too late how he had been hoodwinked, but he had terrified the giants by his divine strength. When Thor went fishing for the Midgard serpent, he was accompanied by a sea giant, Hymir, who was so

frightened when Thor hooked the monster that he cut the line at the crucial moment of the catch. Thor went to the hall of the giant Thrym to recover his stolen hammer, disguised by Loki as the goddess Freyja, coming to be wed, and once he got his hammer back he slew the giant and all the wedding guests.

Odin overcame the giants by disguise and cunning rather than by brute force, and a famous and possibly ancient myth relates how he recovered the magic mead of inspiration, which the giant Suttung had taken and kept within a mountain. In serpent form, Odin crawled through a crack in the rock and then made love to the giant's daughter in return for three drinks of mead. He emptied the three vessels that held it and flew back in the form of an eagle, to vomit up the precious liquid when he reached Asgard. In another tale Loki rescued the stolen golden apples, along with the goddess Idun, and flew off in bird form, pursued by the giant Thjazi in the form of an eagle, but the gods prepared a fire that singed the giant's wings when he flew into Asgard, and he was slain by Thor.

Thus, it can be seen that a number of early and powerful myths are concerned with the struggle of gods against giants to preserve the culture that they had created, until the end comes at Ragnarök. In this battle the giants at last gain entrance to Asgard, accompanied by the monsters that also threaten the gods, and by the treacherous Loki, sometimes represented as a giant. In the final battle both gods and giants perish, while the earth is destroyed by fire and sinks into the sea. But it is fated to rise again from the cleansing waters, to be ruled by the sons of the gods in a new age.

A different relationship between supernatural beings is indicated by marriages between the gods and the daughters of giants. In the poem *Skirnismál* (The Lay of Skirnir), Skirnir woos the fair maiden Gerd on behalf of Frey; she is the daughter of a giant in the underworld and can only be reached by a long and perilous journey. Skadi, daughter of the giant Thjazi, married the god Njord, although the marriage failed because she belonged to the world of mountains and he belonged to the world of the sea.

These northern giants possess a certain power and dignity not retained in later medieval literature. There are traces of a powerful giant race among the Germans. Weland, known to the Anglo-Saxons as a supernatural smith and associated with an ancient burial mound on the Ridgeway in southern England, was a member of a family remembered in heroic poetry. His father was the giant Wade, remembered in English local tradition, and his son was the famous hero Widia. In the romances and folktales, however, giants appear as powerful but rather stupid unnamed beings who wreak havoc in the land, capture maidens and imprison them in their castles, feast on human flesh, and hurl stones and boulders about the landscape. They are overthrown by valiant knights or deceived by intelligent young heroes. In postmedieval folktales, the giant's wife often assists the hero by concealing him from her husband, as in the widespread tale of "Jack the Giant-Killer."

Much local tradition throughout Europe associates giants with impressive ruins or spectacular rocks and hills, while long mounds may be known as their graves. The Anglo-Saxons described the ruins of Roman buildings as the work of giants, as in the poem *The Wanderer*.

The builder of Asgard was a giant, and there are many later legends of two giants flinging stones or a shared hammer from one to the other as they made roads or piled up rocks, and sometimes the giant's wife helped in such operations, carrying stones in her apron until the strings broke. Dropped stones or loads of earth were said to account for certain hills and isolated boulders. Sometimes the giant in such legends was transformed into the devil, but many giants survived in local tradition. They were particularly popular in Cornwall, and according to Geoffrey of Monmouth, this was the case as early as the twelfth century.

Local giants of postmedieval legendry were by no means always hostile figures; many were remembered with affection, and humorous tales were told of them. Some seem to have been local men of outstanding size and strength rather than supernatural figures. Tom Hickathrift is still remembered in East Anglia, where a long piece of granite in a churchyard is identified as his grave and columns of broken memorial crosses are declared to be his candlesticks. He is recalled as a friendly neighborhood giant, whose great exploit was that of overthrowing another giant by using the wheel of the wagon he had been driving as a shield and its axle as a weapon. A similar tale is told of another Tom, known as the Hedger, a Cornish giant remembered as a man of great strength, eight feet tall. Their powers, however, were liable to increase in popular tradition; Tom Hickathrift was said in a rhyme to devour church and steeple, and all the people, and still remain hungry, and his name was used to frighten naughty children.

A custom that kept giant figures alive in popular imagination was that of carrying giant figures in procession in various towns and cities; they were regarded with pride and affection by the townspeople. Most of the English processional giants were destroyed at the Reformation, but one survives at Salisbury. Originally 14 feet high, he is supported on a light wooden frame that can be carried by a succession of men, and he was provided with new clothes from time to time. He was the pageant figure of the Guild of Tailors, mentioned in their records as early as 1570, and was known as St. Christopher since the Middle Ages. He was brought out on June 23, St. John's Eve, and July 15, the eve of St. Ogmund's festival, and he still appears on such special occasions as the Silver Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II.

Two London giants housed in the Guildhall are figures carved in wood, now known as Gog and Magog; in Tudor times they were Gogmagog and Corineus, from Geoffrey of Monmouth's twelfth-century account of the giants of Britain. Earlier still, they were Samson and Hercules. They welcomed Philip of Spain when he married Queen Mary in 1554 and saluted Elizabeth I from Temple Bar when she became queen in 1558. There are also references to two giants

welcoming Henry V in 1415 after his victory over the French in the battle of Agincourt. The present figures replaced eighteenth-century ones—14 feet, 6 inches high—burned in the London Blitz. They were successors to an older pair, destroyed in the Great Fire of London.

Processional giants have fared better in continental Europe and flourished in the Netherlands, Belgium, and northern France, where many are still paraded at festivals. Some are accompanied by dragons and monsters of various kinds, like the Salisbury Hob-Nob, a horse-like figure with snapping jaws that might tear the clothes of people in the crowd.

The folklore of giants is a mixture of horror and comedy, with the latter element predominating. Tales of a local giant getting the better of a villain or of a powerful but simple giant overcome by a quick-witted young opponent are popular because they are amusing. The various landmarks and objects associated with giants are shown to children and thus keep their memory alive. Jestful tales of their exploits, however, are still told among adults, as well as among children, and so it must have been in medieval times.

Hilda Ellis Davidson

See Also Myth.

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Globalization

At its broadest, globalization is an awareness of the world as a complex and interconnected whole brought about and sustained by the worldwide circulation of ideas, beliefs, and cultural practices; the exchange of goods, services, and labor; and the movement of people, technology, and capital.

While globalization is not a recent phenomenon, it is frequently attributed to late twentieth-century technologies, lifestyles, and dominant economic systems (that is, versions of capitalism). Yet the earliest examples of globalization might be found in religious movements like Christianity and Islam as well as in colonialism and imperialism, which also make clear the global interconnectedness of politics, economics, religion, and culture. Globalization is important to the study of folklore

because folklore has long been concerned with cultural production in relation to local community, nationalism, diaspora, ethnicity, identity, politics, economics, and various expressions of power. In general, folklorists have not theorized globalization but have worked to interpret local cultural practices within broader global contexts. To understand the dynamics of globalization, it is necessary to first sketch some of the background theories against which folklorists work and then address issues of particular relevance to folklorists—specifically whether globalization leads to increased worldwide cultural homogenization and whether the local might play a role in processes of globalization. Although there are many ways in which folklorists engage questions of globalization, these exemplify folklorists' concerns with the local production of culture and how shifting notions of community, nationality, and locality influence such productions.

No single theorist can fully capture the unsystematic complexity that characterizes globalization. Systems approaches like those outlined by Wallerstein (1974) and Robertson (1992) provide necessary structural features, overviews of macro-processes, and historical perspectives, which offer a loose framework for envisioning the world at one level. Although these systems approaches obviously overlook the micro-processes of individual “face-to-face” interactions (virtual or real) and the impact that global interconnectedness has on individuals, they do provide useful bases for thinking about the world as a single place. At the other end of the spectrum, theorists such as Hannerz (1996) and Pieterse (1995) stress the micro-level aspects of globalization through their discussions of creolization and hybridity. Hannerz analyzes concrete instances of exchange between traditional “centers” and “peripheries” to provide another level at which to think about globalization, offering glimpses into the immediate effects of global culture on local people. While the traditional anthropological notion of centers and peripheries may seem outdated in an increasingly interconnected world marked by global flows and virtual locales, the center-periphery paradigm, even when removed from specific geographical contexts, can still usefully highlight the power imbalances that remain integral aspects of globalization. As Arjun Appadurai (1996) proposes, centers and peripheries might be linked to diffuse configurations of power, which take the form of transnational corporations or other entities that control or influence the global flows of capital, technologies, ideologies, and media images. In addition, Appadurai's prioritization of rupture and “non-isomorphic” global flows goes the furthest in modeling the global condition.

That globalization entails cultural homogenization, most commonly in the guise of Americanization, is a popular belief that has been theorized in models of cultural imperialism and confirmed by returning tourists, discussed by anthropologists, and commodified in American advertisements and movies. Barber (1995) argues that the process of “McWorld” is one of soft hegemony, an easy way to export American capitalist ideologies to the world, thereby making the world safe for the free market. He grants immense power to the forces of McWorld. In fact, he suggests

that McWorld will eventually defeat what he perceives to be its alternative evil—Jihad (that is, tribalism and radical identity politics). Based on his belief that global information and global culture will eventually kill off parochialism, Barber holds that the culture of McWorld will ultimately be the culture of the world.

On the other hand, Mike Featherstone (1995) and Ulf Hannerz (1996) complicate theories of cultural imperialism in their reflections on the increasingly local nature of the global and the simultaneous global nature of the local. When people migrate, the culture traditions that travel best—those with sensory power like music, folktales, foodways, and festivals—travel with them. At the same time, the sensory power of these traditions delivers them to the market, incorporates them into multicultural policy work, and allows them to serve as somewhat superficial points of cultural exchange. In some senses, the local is globally homogenized in the same way that American (or Western) culture is said to homogenize all other cultures: not only does one find McDonald's, Coca-Cola, and Nike around the world, but one also finds Chinese food, African music, and May Day celebrations. Of equal importance, then, is Amy Shuman's article "Dismantling Local Culture" (1993), in which she reminds folklorists that the category of the local has been used uncritically to signal a natural, authentic, romantic response to globalizing forces at the expense of local cultural practices and the people who sustain them.

As the world grows more interconnected and as emergent technologies allow more of us to experience this global interconnectedness, the global cultural homogenization thesis may seem attractive. However, general impressions and observations are not enough to sustain theory. Only continued investigations of local practice with respect to global commodities, images, and information will help us answer the pressing question of how we are to read instances of global-local cultural exchange.

Kimberly J. Lau

See Also Worldview.

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Gossip

A form of discourse between persons discussing the behavior, character, situation, or attributes of absent others. Gossip is a speech act in which people make sense of their world by providing a charter for belief in the moral character of known social actors. Folklorist Sally Yerkovich defines gossip so as to emphasize its “morality”: “a form of sociable interaction which depends upon the strategic management of information through the creation of others as ‘moral characters’ in talk.” Unlike rumor or other forms of hearsay, most gossip is not assumed to be false; rather, its defining feature is that its target is not present while moral judgments are made.

Social scientists take three basic approaches to explain the motivation for gossip: the functional approach, the transactional approach, and the conflict approach. The functional view argues that gossip serves a function for a social system by asserting collective values. Gossip is an indirect sanction that avoids direct confrontation and strengthens group boundaries. To gossip is to be part of a community.

The transaction approach emphasizes the strategic value that gossip has for its narrator. Gossip projects individual interests through information control and is a form of impression management. Often, gossipers will become the center of attention and be viewed as people “in the know.” The decision to spread gossip is closely connected to the relationship between narrator and audience and to the narrator’s expectation of the receptivity of the audience. The conflict perspective emphasizes how gossip has the potential to be utilized as a political strategy by groups for their collective purposes. The discrediting of an oppositional force through gossip, or propaganda, is a well-known technique used by those who wish to persuade others. Although gossip has not been extensively studied by Marxists, it is clear that ruling classes might encourage negative gossip against indigenous revolutionary figures to split the working class.

Many have remarked that gossip has expanded in the twentieth century through its central placement in media outlets. Gossip columnists such as Hedda Hopper, Louella Parsons, and Walter Winchell became forces to be reckoned with in the twentieth century. In the United States, gossip has seemed even more prevalent in media outlets in recent years, with the growing popularity of the *Star* and other

tabloids, of *People* magazine and its imitators, and of television shows such as *Hard Copy* that center on the dissemination of personal information about celebrities. Stories about “personalities” have long had an important role in popular outlets. Sociologists Jack Levin and Arnold Arluke (1987) emphasized that media gossip has its own rules and limits, and they demonstrated that most media gossip is positive and that most gossip reporters behave in an ethical fashion.

Because oral gossip is moral discourse, concerned with the reputation of the teller and the target, its production in conversation is quite complex. In the words of Jorg Bergmann, gossip is “discreet indiscretion.” The parties delicately construct the meaning of the gossip in such a way that their views of proper behavior are upheld by others. Gossip topics are proposed and accepted. Moral indignation is deployed and responded to. As Bergmann and others have demonstrated, the conversation analysis of gossip holds considerable promise for demonstrating the significance of this traditional genre.

Gary Alan Fine

See Also Rumor.

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Graffiti

Written, anonymous, short, and frequently traditional commentaries placed on public walls, desktops, subway cars, sidewalks, and other flat surfaces. The media of choice include spray paint, pencil, and ink, or the commentaries may be scratched or etched in the surfaces. The term *graffiti* has come into English from the Italian, derived from a word meaning “to scratch.” It was first used extensively



Spray-painted urban street art on a wall in New York. (iStockphoto.com)

by art historians to refer to the scratched or etched political slogans discovered on the walls of ancient Pompeii and to artistic designs created by scratching away the outer color layer to reveal the contrasting color beneath. A related term is *latrinalia*, or writings on public bathroom walls, which frequently tend to focus on more profane, sexual, and scatological topics. Graffiti ranges in form from doggerel to epigrams to slogans to single words, often personal names and place-names. Some graffiti is elaborate enough to be regarded as an art form, especially when stylized lettering and dramatic color schemes are utilized. Written form characterizes the genre, distinguishing graffiti from murals and other public artistic displays.

The content of graffiti usually is topical, responding to current events, political trends, and local issues. For example, “stop the bombing,” “get out of Cambodia,” and “make love, not war” were common graffiti during the Vietnam War. AIDS, homosexuality, and feminism became common topics during the 1990s. Whimsicality and wittiness also are distinguishing characteristics of the genre. One example is the enigmatic “Kilroy was here,” which originated in World War II. Many slogans on T-shirts, bumper stickers, and coffee mugs represent a popular culture exploitation of the form. Because of its topical subject matter, most graffiti is short-lived, being either deliberately erased or replaced by another writer.

The subjects addressed in graffiti, however, are as varied as the graffiti artists themselves. Much research has been conducted regarding the differences in graffiti in various college and university buildings—the chemistry building versus

the fine arts building or the men's gym versus the women's gym. Of course, the graffiti in these specialized locales generally reflects the interests and concerns of the students (and faculty) who frequent them.

Another characteristic of graffiti is its interactive quality, expressed as conversations or "runs" in which a variety of successive writers add to and comment on the original statement. For example, many sources report variations on the following run: "God is dead"—"Don't worry, Mary is pregnant again"—"God isn't dead. He just doesn't want to get involved"—"Who is God anyway?" Sometimes these runs continue until the available wall space is used up.

At the opposite end of the spectrum is urban graffiti that consists of a single person's nickname or a gang name or symbol. As a rule, the defacing of such graffiti is the catalyst for gang retaliation. A distinctive Mexican American graffiti, *con safos* (or its abbreviation, *c/s*), functions to prevent the defacement of any name graffiti that it accompanies because of the folk belief among Mexican Americans that to deface such distinctively protected graffiti is to reflexively harm oneself. An oral folk rhyme expressing this same sentiment is "I'm rubber, you're glue. What you throw at me, sticks to you."

As mentioned, much urban graffiti is gang or "turf" related, and thus it functions as a boundary marker. In hotly contested areas or intersections, practically all of the walls and sidewalks may be covered with contrasting graffiti. The subway cars of New York City have provided the most dramatic example of excessive graffiti. Such gang-related graffiti utilizes a combination of gang colors, names, and symbols. In such cases, municipal authorities usually regard creating graffiti as defacing public property or vandalism punishable by fines and imprisonment. The problem with such regulations, however, is that the writers of graffiti are inherently anonymous, which usually precludes their apprehension by the authorities. In some communities, as part of negotiations to end gang violence, the authorities will work out a truce in which the various gangs come together publicly to wash off and paint over the offending graffiti of all the involved groups.

Graffiti can be classified as folklore for many reasons. Although most researchers regard graffiti as a separate and distinct genre, others make a strong case that graffiti is a specialized kind of written folk speech because of its poetic and narrative characteristics. Regardless of genre classification, graffiti is undoubtedly traditional, with a pedigree extending back historically to the ancient Romans and possibly further. It also employs traditional, doggerel verse forms that reappear generation after generation, such as latrinalia with the common introduction "Here I sit. . . ." The anonymity of the graffiti writers is another characteristic that places graffiti squarely in the purview of folklore. Finally, graffiti is associated with distinctive folk groups, ranging from the habitués of various university buildings to socially deviant groups such as gangs to various ethnic groups.

Sylvia Grider

See Also Inscription.

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Great Tradition/Little Tradition

The distinction between the higher, elite levels of a civilization (*great tradition*) and the folk or popular levels (*little tradition*). Little traditions are most often associated with the pre-urban stages or non-urban, nonliterate/illiterate levels of society and are products of the village or the common people. The basis of the great tradition is rooted in the little traditions of the folk level. As a society

undergoes primary urbanization, the little traditions become codified, evolve into great traditions, and often fall subordinate to the aesthetics and learning of the great traditions.

In contrast to little traditions, great traditions represent the highest levels of the intellectual and aesthetic achievements of a civilization, and as such, they are transmitted and preserved in some codified, stylized “text” form. As the codified and developed cultural heritage of the society, they provide the sources for identity among members of the society by providing the rules of conduct, the primary philosophy, religion, standards, cultural norms, and aesthetic sensibilities. Great traditions are the product of the reflective, literate, philosophic few, and they are a result of urbanization. Further, they represent the mediated, codified, and intellectualized little traditions extant in a culture. The existence of a set of great and little traditions within a civilization depends upon consciousness of a common culture built on the common cultural artifacts within the little traditions.

The study of great traditions is most often associated with textual studies, such as history, the classics, or comparative religion. The focus of these disciplines is, typically, the understanding of various cultures through their great traditions. Most of these studies find their models in the traditional studies of ancient Greece and Rome and the “Oriental Renaissance” studies of classic Persian, Chinese, Japanese, and Indic texts. Little traditions, however, are most often the realm of the cultural anthropologist, the ethnographer, and the folklorist.

The useful definition and study of great and little traditions began in earnest with Robert Redfield’s studies in the 1930s and with his joint projects with Milton Singer in the 1940s and 1950s. Basic to these definitions was Redfield’s idea of the folk-urban continuum, which traces societies on a scale from tribal to urban as a part of human cultural development. According to this system, a society evolves from a simpler, tribal system, with its own sets of beliefs, norms, and standards (little traditions), to a more sophisticated, primary urban center, with a codified set of norms, beliefs, and aesthetic and intellectual achievements interpreted by a ruling elite (great traditions). The creation of these primary urban centers occurs in a process that Redfield defined as *orthogenetic transformation*, in which an evolving ruling group interprets and mediates between the several little traditions surrounding the developing urban center to develop and codify a great tradition.

Like little traditions, great traditions can evolve when a primary urban center comes in conflict with another culture or even with conflicting ideologies. The mediation between the cultures leads to the development of a secondary (or tertiary, quaternary, ad infinitum) urban center, with the conflicting traditions mediated by a select intelligentsia who present the new traditions to the indigenous culture and explain the existing great traditions to the interlopers. Robert Redfield defined this process as *heterogenetic transformation*, in which a conquering group destroys and replaces the great traditions of the indigenous group by way of the

intelligentsia. Milton Singer offered the example of Madras in India as a heterogenetic city. There is no singular great tradition in Madras, but there are several overlapping versions of the Hindic great tradition, with a great deal of admixture among the competing versions. As a colonial city and later the primary government and commerce city for the British in southeast India, Madras was the communication point for many of the great traditions that existed there, as well as the relay point for transmitting the British ideologies to the local citizenry.

The concepts of great and little traditions are polar types; folk and urban lie at opposite ends of the spectrum, with evolving stages of little traditions turning into great traditions falling in intervals along the continuum. The traditional bias, though, has been to view the continuum in a linear fashion, with folk giving way to urban. Inherent in this bias is a view of the folk as rural and of folk groups as existing only in a rural, nonliterate or illiterate setting. For the folklorist, though, it is more useful if the term *little tradition* is defined as the traditions particular to a specific folk group and the term *great tradition* is defined as the mediated, codified, intellectualized little traditions extant within a specific culture.

Randal S. Allison

See Also Folk Culture; Tradition.

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Grimm Brothers

German scholars and writers: Jakob Ludwig (1785–1863) was a pioneer of linguistics whose theory of consonantal evolution became known as Grimm’s Law, whereas Wilhelm Karl (1786–1859) was a literary historian. They combined their talents in a project to record the folktales of the German-speaking nations, issuing the first version of their classic collection in two volumes as *Die Kinder- und Häsmärchen* (1812–1814); later editions were substantially expanded and revised. Many selections from the collection were translated into English, some of the tales—including “Hansel and Gretel,” “Rapunzel,” “Rumpelstiltskin,” “The Twelve Dancing Princesses,” “The Little Tailor,” and “Snow White and Rose Red”—becoming very familiar, usually but not exclusively in bowdlerized versions. Wilhelm Grimm encouraged this process by adding more literary polish and toning

The Brothers Grimm. (Library of Congress)



down the tales in later editions, but translators usually felt free to make alterations of their own: Edgar Taylor, their first English translator, insisted on substituting giants for demons and refused to reproduce the celebrated climactic scene in which Snow White's stepmother is fitted with red-hot iron shoes to make her dance herself to death. A complete modern translation of 241 stories, which attempts to recover the original versions—including some the brothers wrote down but never published—is *The Complete Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm*, edited by Jack Zipes (2003).

The Grimms were closely involved with the evolution of the German Romantic movement and enthusiasts for German idealistic philosophy; their endeavors played a major part in the attempt to discover an authentic German *Volksgeist* ("spirit of the people") in folktales and folksongs that allegedly preserved the roots of Germanic culture and language. (A similar thesis regarding the complicity of folk art in the evolution of language was developed in England by Owen Barfield, a member of the Inklings whose ideas provided an ideological basis for excursions into fantastic fiction by J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis.) Referring to comparisons carried out by Heinz Rölleke, however, John M. Ellis (1983) complained in *One Fairy Story Too Many* that the Grimms were never true to Jakob's original intention to preserve the tales as they were actually told, and collected most of them from middle-class friends. The Grimms' printed versions, Ellis alleges, gave much more attention to story structure and character motivation than the versions in their handwritten notes, but this criticism may not take

fully into account the essential differences between oral and written discourse, or the extent to which the written notes were *aide-mémoire* rather than verbatim transcriptions.

The tales collected by the Grimms are considerably darker and nastier than those adopted into literary form by French writers a century before, as can readily be ascertained by comparing their “Ashputtle” with Perrault’s “Cendrillon.” This endears them to folklorists ambitious to recover folktales from the morass of children’s literature, and to modern writers ambitious to exploit the horrific potential of revisionist folktales, who delight in the fact that their name is an English pun; a cardinal example of that relish is Tanith Lee’s (1983) *Red as Blood; or, Tales from the Sisters Grimmer*. The antiquity of many of the tales is doubtful; although the overlap between the Grimms’ collection and Perrault’s might be partly due to the tales being handed down from remote sources in parallel traditions, the fact that it includes a version of “Little Red Riding Hood”—which Perrault appears to have originated—suggests that direct transmission is more likely. If so, the darker elements may have more to do with the generous license granted to contemporary German child carers to indulge in vivid moral terrorism—graphically illustrated by Heinrich Hoffmann’s (1845) *Struwwelpeter*—than with any deep-seated aspect of the German *Volksgeist* (although Nazi ideology was later to make much of the stoical aspects of that alleged *Volksgeist*, and the Disney version of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* was rumored to be Adolf Hitler’s favorite film). The Grimms’ hypothesis that “Briar Rose” is a demotic variant of the enchantment of Brynhild in the *Volsungasaga* rather than an adaptation of Perrault’s “Sleeping Beauty” is not entirely implausible, but the idea of a beautiful woman awaiting a magical kiss to awaken her from suspended animation is surely not so esoteric that it might have remained forever uninvented but for the inspiration of some unknown Bronze Age genius. The tale in question has spawned so many spectacular deliberate variants—of which the most spectacular include Leon Garfield’s (1985) *The Wedding Ghost*, Jane Yolen’s (1992) *Briar Rose*, and Robert Coover’s (1996) *Briar Rose*—that the basic metaphor obviously strikes a powerful resonance in many would-be tellers.

The Grimms might be reckoned slightly fortunate to have hijacked the credit for committing so many narrative formulas to print, given that they were only occasionally the first to do so and that their versions are primarily important as stimuli to further and finer literary endeavor, but few other writers have been privileged to leave such an indelible stamp on the imaginative produce of generations to come.

Brian Stableford

See Also Fairy Tale Heroes.

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H

Helpers, Folk

Heroes frequently have help from various sources in the pursuit of their quests and in overcoming the obstacles presented to them. The helper may be an older person, as in some versions of *Havelock the Dane*; a member of the opposite sex, as in *Hansel and Gretel*; a supernatural or otherwise invisible helper, such as the Fairy Godmother of *Cinderella*; or one or more magical objects, such as a cloak of invisibility or a magical sword, staff, or other device. The tambourine of Miriam, sister of Moses, for example, enables a rabbi to open the book that confers one Jew from each generation with the knowledge to make him advisor to the king of Babylon. Even a doll may be a helper, as in the Russian story of *Vasilisa*.

Birds, fish, rabbits, mice, dogs, cats, lions, or other animals are found as helpers of heroes and heroines in the folklore of many nations and cultures, a representative example being Bahram, son of a poor Persian couple who peels silkworm cocoons for their meager living. Bahram rescues a cat, a dog, and a snake from various forms of mistreatment, and these grateful animals help him through a long series of adventures, at the end of which he marries the beautiful princess.

Helpers are also common in the lore of historical figures. The late twelfth-century French minstrel Blondel de Nesle appears in legend as a companion of



Cinderella and her Fairy Godmother, illustrated by Nadir Quinto (1918–1994). (Look and Learn/The Bridgeman Art Library International)

King Richard I of England (Richard the Lionheart). Blondel, in order to locate Richard after his capture and imprisonment, sings a song he and Richard had composed. He then frees the grateful monarch from his prison and spares the king's subjects from having to raise a massive ransom. Richard is then able to return to England and free his people from oppression.

A small but significant group of heroes is celebrated for their willingness and ability to heal wounds, either physical or supernatural. Healers are a species of helper, constants of hero legendry, and are found in most folk traditions. Healers may also be wise men or women and/or magicians who use their supernatural powers to effect not only cures but also supernatural or physical wounds and ailments. Examples of such healing helpers include the Eight Immortals, Loqman, Tawhaki, and Yao Wang.

Possible helper roles are many, though not unlimited, and helpers appear frequently in most folk hero traditions. So integral is the role of helper that, as the Russian folklorist Vladimir Propp once observed, “when a helper is absent from a tale, this quality is transferred to the hero.” In other words, heroes, in the absence of helpers, themselves overcome whatever obstacles may have appeared. So common and important are helpers that all explanatory approaches to folktale devote considerable attention to them and their attributes.

While the helper is a generally positive element, helpers may sometimes have a negative aspect. For example, there are a number of tales in which a hero or heroine defeats a menacing helper by learning his or her name. Rumpelstiltskin is perhaps the most widely known of such “name of the helper” tales, though there are many similar traditions, such as those of Austria (Purzinegele), Hungary (Winterkölbl), and Britain (Tom Tit Tot in England, Whuppity Stoorie in Scotland, Peerifool in the Orkneys). Among the Slavic peoples there is also the tale of Kinkach Martinko.

Graham Seal

See Also Animals; Animal Tale; Hero/Heroine, Folk.

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Hemispheric Approach

Theory that each Western Hemisphere country's folklore should be studied in its distinctive ethnic and historical contexts. Developed by Richard M. Dorson in the 1950s, the approach sought to distinguish American folklore (specifically,

that of the United States) from the traditions of Europe and other sources of immigration. The initial colonization of the Americas, the importation of slaves from Africa, and continuing waves of immigration from various cultures, especially Europe and Asia, created a set of folk traditions that lacked the holistic national identity and long-standing rootedness found in Old World societies. Western Hemisphere folklore emerged from such processes of culture contact as acculturation, retention, and revitalization. Coupled with the particular histories of Western Hemisphere nations, these processes have generated heterogeneous sets of folklore traditions.

Dorson focused primarily on the folklore of the United States. He identified several historical forces that contributed to the distinctiveness of American folklore. His list of these forces changed with the development of the approach; the final catalog of them (published posthumously) cited colonization, the revolution, the frontier, slavery, the Civil War, immigration, and industrialization. (Earlier lists had also included the presence of aboriginal Americans and the influence of the mass media.) Dorson contrasted his hemispheric approach with theories and methodologies that focused cross-culturally on themes, symbols, or patterns in folklore without regard to their cultural contexts and with approaches that examined a limited number of texts or performances of folklore only in terms of their immediate situation. A folklorist who adopted Dorson's hemispheric approach, by contrast, would place the materials of folklore within the broad currents of American cultural history. The ways in which folklore reinforced the dominant ethos of a particular society became the most important target of investigation.

Dorson positioned his approach as contrasting "American folklore" with "folklore in America." The latter perspective analyzed folklore encountered in the United States using the same methods that applied to folklore encountered elsewhere. A structural study of an Appalachian Jack tale, for instance, would utilize structural methodology that might work equally well on a *Märchen* collected in Germany. However, the hemispheric approach would consider the folktale in the context of American history and life, perhaps emphasizing the importance of regionalism in shaping its content.

The hemispheric approach's almost exclusive focus on surface content and lack of interest in structure, function, symbolism, and performance limited its appeal for folklorists concerned with those features of folklore. Moreover, folklorists who did not study Western Hemisphere folklore (or that of Australia, whose cultural history Dorson believed to be similar to that of Western Hemisphere nations) found little to interest them in the hemispheric approach. Consequently, when Dorson reviewed the approach a decade after he first published it as a formal statement, he could cite only a few studies besides his own that might be identified as using that approach. His final articulation of the approach, published two years

after his death, concluded by noting that very little had been done by folklorists using the perspective.

William M. Clements

See Also Historical Analysis; Worldview.

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Hero/Heroine, Folk

A character depicted as the center of action in real or fictitious accounts of life and living. The attributes of the hero/heroine depend on the narrator's intent (i.e., the genre through which a given cultural expression is made), as well as the psychological composition (national character, modal personality) of the social group to which the hero/heroine belongs. Also, within the same social group, demographic factors (e.g., gender, age, religion) will affect how a hero/heroine is presented and perceived. Whatever the specifics of the situation may be, a hero/heroine will evoke in the listener or reader a sense of belonging through certain psychological processes associated with vicarious instigation, such as modeling, empathy, sympathy, and positive identification. As the model, a hero/heroine's success is gratifying, and his or her failure is punitive. In certain cases in which a character's heroic attributes are not pronounced, such a narrative persona may be referred to as a protagonist. Typically, a hero/heroine is opposed to a villain—also labeled an antihero. A villain evokes a sense of alienation through negative identification; his or her failure is gratifying, and his or her success is punitive.

Certain folklore genres are more commonly associated with heroic characters and action (e.g., epics, sagas, and myths); the little-used term *hero tale* (compare *Heldensage*) was introduced to designate such narratives. Yet the hero/heroine appears across a broad spectrum of cultural expressions, being the most common and best-known figure in world folklore and mythology. The heroic character reflects the qualities needed to conquer chaos and overcome the temptations advanced by the forces of evil or darkness. Thus, in many myths and folktales, the sun, the giver of light, is identified ideally with the hero/heroine figure. The cult, lore, and mythology of the hero/heroine have thrived since prehistoric times due to the demands of war

Villains, Folk

Heroes cannot exist without villains. Generally these figures represent evil or wrongdoing of some kind and span an amazing array of types, including magicians, sorcerers, ogres, giants, fairies, elves, dwarves, witches, demons, the Devil, temptresses, dragons, giant worms, and snakes. The purpose of such characters is to oppose, obstruct, or undermine the hero and in many cases to personify the principle of evil. As such, villains represent a force that is out of kilter with the rightful order of things, and accordingly, in folklore at least, they must be overcome so that the natural balance can be restored.

The Baba-Yaga (Iaga) of Russian and Slavic tradition exemplifies most of the characteristics of folk villains. She is an evil, often cannibalistic witch figure, similar in many respects to the witch who plans to eat Hansel and Gretel. She lives away from humankind, deep in remote forests, and has great magical powers that she uses to attain her usually wicked ends, although like some other villains of the supernatural type, the Baba-Yaga is occasionally helpful to heroes.

Similar in many ways are the tall, big-bosomed wild women of Polish tradition known as Dwi-Wozoney, and as the Diva-ta-Zena in Bulgarian belief. Despite their frigid hearts, these women are passionate lovers, often enslaving younger humans. They may tickle humans to death, and, like the fairies, they are said to substitute changelings for human children. They are symbolic of the villainy that heroes must overcome in all traditions.

The principle of evil may be present in anything and anywhere and, in a wide range of possibilities and permutations, is a constant feature of world folklores. It is most vividly and consistently a principal component of folktales, though it may also be important in ballads and other forms of folk expression, such as traditional drama, proverbial sayings, folk belief and customs.

Graham Seal



The Witch Baba Yaga by Wassily Kandinsky (1866–1944). (Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, NY/© 2010 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris)

and to the traits and behaviors associated with heroism, which humanity has felt the urge to accentuate, glorify, and record in oral, graphic, and written form.

Heroic behaviors include saving individuals and nations from destructive forces or leading them from danger, discovering hidden treasure, and reuniting people with deities or the life principle. Moreover, among hero/heroine figures, there is a great variety of types—for instance, the deity-like culture hero, the historical figure, the trickster, the strong man, the strong woman, the ignorant hero, the ingénue, the beautiful youth, the saint, and the magician. A small sample of motifs dealing with heroes/heroines may illustrate the great diversity of this theme as it occurs in folk literature: A500–A599, “Demigods and culture-heroes”; A5 11.1.2, “Culture-hero speaks before birth”; A5 11.1.3.2, “Demigod son of king’s unmarried sister by her brother”; A5 11.3.2, “Culture-hero reared (educated) by extraordinary (supernatural) personages”; A512.3, “Culture-hero as son of god”; A522.3.1, “Spider as culture-hero”; A5 22.22, “Raven as culture-hero”; L100–L199, “Unpromising hero (heroine)”; L101, “Unpromising hero (male Cinderella)”; L102, “Unpromising heroine”; L11 1.3, “Widow’s son as hero”; L11 1.5, “Bastard hero”; L11 2.3, “Deformed child as hero”; L1 14. 1, “Lazy hero”; L1 14.4, “Cheater as hero”; L160, “Success of the unpromising hero (heroine)”; M361, “Fated hero. Only certain hero will succeed in exploit”; Z292, “Death of hero”; and Z293, “Return of hero” (compare K2200–K2299, “Villains and traitors”).

Joseph Campbell has shown that although hero/heroine tales and myths occur around the world and may vary in detail, close analysis reveals these stories have structural similarities that persist across cultures and historical periods. Such stories have, in other words, a universal pattern, despite arising from groups or individuals having no direct contact with each other. Repeatedly, one observes tales describing a miraculous but common birth, demonstration of superhuman strength and ability, rapid rise to prominence or power, triumphant struggle with the forces of evil, proneness to pride, and ultimate decline through betrayal or sacrifice resulting in death. Moreover, in many such stories, early weakness is offset by the emergence of a powerful mentor or guardian figure who assists in the execution of superhuman tasks that cannot be accomplished alone. For example, among Greek heroic figures, Theseus had Poseidon, god of the sea, Perseus had Athena, goddess of wisdom, and Achilles had Chiron, the centaur, as guides.

The central example of the hero/heroine motif in Western culture is the story of Jesus Christ, who is born humbly but with numerous associated miracles, reveals superhuman abilities and wonders, rises quickly to a position of high esteem among his followers, struggles with the forces of evil represented by Satan, and then suffers death through betrayal as the ultimate sacrifice for humanity. The only one of the elements listed earlier that does not appear in the

Dragon-Slayers

A major class of heroes and heroines, dragon-slayers and their victims are a constant feature in the traditions of the world. As with many other categories or types of hero, dragon-slayers are predominantly, though not exclusively, male. Closely allied to giant-killers, dragon-slayers often begin life as good-for-nothing layabouts and youngest or only sons, their adventures and misadventures leading to the revelation of unsuspected bravery, strength, and skill. Usually dragon-slayers survive their combats with the scaly fire-breathers and go on to win the gold, the girl, and the kingdom. In one case, at least, that of St. George, a dragon-slayer has become a national and culture hero in a number of different countries and cultures.

Folk heroes generally consider dragons to be in the same general class as serpents, giant worms, sea monsters, and even giant man-eating boars, as in a Papuan tale. Whenever they appear—which is often—dragon-slayers are usually interpreted as culture heroes and/or warrior heroes, such as the princess-rescuing dragon-slayer of Russian folktales, Frolka-Stay-at-Home.



Fresco of Saint George killing the dragon on a medieval castle's wall. (Claudio Divizia/Dreamstime.com)

Some scholars consider dragon-slaying motifs and themes in a psychoanalytic light, that is, as projections of our desires to overcome obstacles. Other interpretations see them as survivals of an earlier era in which humans did battle with large, now mostly extinct creatures in a day-to-day battle for survival and mastery, which humans eventually won. From a cultural point of view, dragon-slayers are usually seen as representative of the forces of good over the power of evil, symbolized by loathsome creatures.

Graham Seal

Christ-as-hero story is proneness to pride. Also, the Christ story contains the added component of a miraculous return to physical life after death.

More typically, the hero/heroine sets out from a mundane home environment, is called to a quest or adventure, crosses a threshold of some kind, and is subjected to a number of trials or ordeals, culminating in an ultimate test of will and virtue—a struggle with a dragon or other creature representing the forces of darkness (in psychological terms, the unconscious). Victory over the monster is rewarded with a treasure, such as a kingdom and a beautiful princess as bride.

Cross-culturally, the hero/heroine's first goal is the conquest of self; so, besides folklorists, psychologists and students of religion are attracted to the study and analysis of heroic myth and lore. For instance, according to dream and folktale psychoanalytic interpretation, the hero/heroine embodies the triumph of the developed ego over the primitive forces of the id, or primal instincts. And from the more heterodox psychoanalytic perspective of Otto Rank, the following elements are typical of the lives of heroic figures such as Moses, Paris, Siegfried, Romulus, and Lohengrin:

1. Birth to royal or noble parents, with gestation and birth being shrouded in secrecy.
2. A tyrannical father who wishes to suppress or kill his offspring.
3. Abandonment of the offspring in a mysterious place until the child is found and raised by impoverished parents, by a poor woman, or by animals.
4. Growth to maturity, discovery of the tyrannical father, and vengeful killing of him.
5. Elevation to the father's status, along with celebration as a hero or deification.

This sequence of life events differs markedly from the one noted by Campbell as occurring in heroic myth and folklore, and it reflects early psychoanalytically inspired ideas on the universal occurrence of infantile fantasies about the father, or "the Oedipal complex," in which the father is an object of sexual envy by the son.

In contrast, from the perspective of Jungian analysis, the hero/heroine's life takes on a more spiritual cast, in which his or her typical solar attributes reflect a

deepening and broadening of consciousness through the raising of unconscious images and feelings to conscious awareness, that is, illumination or enlightenment. In Jungian terms, the hero/heroine is the most widely accepted archetypal symbol of the libido, psyche, or spirit, and in the heroic life, the historical and symbolic are seen as identical, with the evolution of the hero/heroine's greater personality or self through various trials being termed *individuation*.

In interpreting heroic myth and lore at the level of culture, the hero/heroine may be seen as the restorer of healthy, positive functioning in circumstances in which a group has deviated from its pattern of collective cooperation or integration. This societal-cultural level of symbolism parallels the individual level, in which the ego or outer personality is restored to functioning in harmony with the inner self or higher nature.

Thus, across cultures, folklore and myths about the hero/heroine unfold in ways that reflect the general stages of human growth or transformation. Winnebago Indian myths, for example, show a typical development from primitive to highly sophisticated conceptions of the hero/heroine as symbolic figure representing personal evolution.

Paul Radin, in examining Winnebago hero tale cycles, reveals four discrete stages in the hero's journey through life: Trickster, Hare, Red Horn, and Twin. The Trickster cycle involves the earliest and least evolved phase of human development, when primary physical demands predominate and the hero behaves instinctually, boldly, and often childishly. This figure initially takes the form of an animal who goes through a series of mischievous adventures, being represented in American folklore by Brer Rabbit. Through the course of these exploits, Trickster changes and begins to resemble a mature individual at the end of the cycle.

The next cycle in the Winnebago tale series is that of Hare, who, like Trickster, first appears as an animal without full human attributes but nonetheless is viewed as the progenitor of human culture. This figure reflects an advance on the character of Trickster, in that Hare is becoming socialized, modifying Trickster's self-centered and childish cravings.

Red Horn, the third figure in the Winnebago hero series, reflects ambiguous qualities and meets the criteria of the typical folk hero by passing various trials, proving his courage in battle, manifesting superhuman powers, and having a powerful mentor, a thunderbird named "Storms-as-he-walks," who compensates for Red Horn's deficiencies. With the Red Horn figure, the level of humanity has been reached, albeit haltingly, and the help of supernatural powers is required to guarantee the hero's triumph over evil powers. Toward the end of the cycle, Red Horn's mentor departs, leaving him to his own devices and showing that a human being's security and well-being derive from within himself or herself.

The theme of the last cycle in the series, that of the Twins, reflects the question of how a person is to be successful in life without succumbing to his or her own

pride or ego—in folk or mythic terms, the jealousy of the gods. The Twins, Flesh and Stump, although said to be sons of the Sun, are basically human and comprise a single individual, reflecting the two sides of human nature—introversion or inward directedness and extroversion or assertiveness, respectively. For a long period during the tale cycle, these figures appear to be invincible, defeating all challengers. But over time, they fall victim to pride, and their unbridled behavior brings about their downfall. Their sentence is death, but since they have become so frightened by their own reckless abuse of power, they agree to live in a constant state of rest—symbolically, the two sides of human nature thus become balanced.

The universal or archetypal quality of hero/heroine myths and folktales has given them great appeal for people of all cultures through the ages. Since they symbolize and reflect the process of both individual and societal growth and development, they resonate with the inner and outer needs and desires of all human beings and have thus attained a place of cross-cultural prominence.

Hasan El-Shamy

See Also Culture Hero; Folktale; Jungian Psychology; Myth.

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Historical Analysis

Method of scholarship that examines folkloric texts over time and as a process. Since folklore is a discipline that studies traditional processes (i.e., items or performances that are rooted in the past but continue to adapt and change for current use), most folklorists have looked at historical developments to shed light on changes in a particular tradition rather than to study history as an element of folklore. Scrutinizing folklore as a process that changes over time enables us to recognize patterns and

structures. This method also reveals versions and variations among and between texts and cultures, which would not be recognizable without some degree of historical depth. Thus, studies of material culture, folksong, traditional narrative, folk drama, and so on include, of necessity, a historical component. Although there are folkloric theories that do not depend upon the development and change of traditional culture to explain their perspectives, those that do look to those processes to explicate a particular outcome, provide a model to test a particular theory, or reconstruct a group's perspective of its past and rationale for the present.

The study of folklore began as the search for survivals of elite culture among European peasants. The eighteenth-century German theologian Johann Gottfried von Herder, known as the father of romantic nationalism, regarded the oral traditions of the "folk" as encompassing the wisdom of the Germanic forefathers; in the face of the French domination of Europe, such a philosophy provided a refuge in a historical past whose traditions could serve only to inspire the cultural and political unification of the Germanic states. Nineteenth-century philologists such as Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm collected and arranged *Märchen* (or folktales) in order to justify their theories about language and culture transmission, as well as to rediscover the authentic soul of "the people" during the development and consolidation of European nationalism. In nineteenth-century England, Edward Tylor, like other evolutionary anthropologists and early folklorists who were followers of social Darwinism, regarded items of traditional culture as evidence of stages in the social evolution of colonial and European cultures: Customs and beliefs among Africans or Pacific Islanders could be taken as representative of the primitive stage of humankind, and the survivals of folk customs among European peasants illustrated the barbaric stage of European peoples. Although not very good historical analysis, the perspective of Tylor and other evolutionists did depend upon a notion about historical processes that strongly influenced folklore scholarship—that the past could be reconstructed by studying contemporary "survivals" of traditional culture. Hence, the ballad studies of Francis Gummere, George Lyman Kittredge, Francis J. Child, and others constituted attempts to prove that contemporary fragments or whole texts of folksongs represented the survivals of a historical golden age, rather than functional living texts for those who performed them.

Myth-ritual scholars also were fascinated with the evolutionary question of whether ritual (action) or myth (explanation) came first. Most of the early scholars in this field did not investigate living cultures but speculated about the probable evolution and relation of myth and ritual based on classical texts. James Frazer, Max Müller, Jane Harrison, Stith Thompson, Lord Raglan, William Bascom, and others carried on years-long scholarly debates over this issue. Such analyses came to be seen as passé because of their emphasis on origins rather than function or cultural context.

Early social scientists Karl Marx, Émile Durkheim, Sigmund Freud, and Carl Jung also looked to the folklore of "primitive" peoples to illustrate their theories

about political, social, and psychological developmental stages. Using historical texts derived from the Bible, creation myths, and personal narratives, they re-created their versions of human evolution. Interestingly, their scholarly antecedents tended to disregard the historical component and focus on issues of function, geographical determinism, and the structural underpinnings of cultures.

Literature scholars such as Francis J. Child also looked for and at relics, fragments, or survivals of folksong texts rather than at their performance contexts. The goal of such scholars was to speculate about the devolution of elite culture as preserved by the lower classes, as if the latter were merely vessels for past glories. Child compiled a multivolume compendium of ballads, versions, and fragments, which he arranged in a “chronological” order based on the topics of the songs. Although Child was an armchair scholar, folksong scholars Cecil Sharp and Maud Karpeles were involved with actively collecting songs from real people in England and in the United States in order to reconstruct a national folklore and teach it to schoolchildren. With the twentieth-century focus on sociology and psychology as opposed to history, the ballad and folksong scholars who persisted in debating the historical origins and transmission paths of their texts had begun to seem almost anachronistic by the time their evolutionary and devolutionary theories were summarized and laid to rest by D. K. Wilgus in 1959. By the end of the 1960s, Albert Lloyd, a member of a socialist scholars’ circle in England that was consciously involved with rewriting English history to conform to a Marxist evolutionary model, had recast the story of folksong and ballad scholarship to reveal the working-class roots, and thus the authenticity, of Child and broadside ballads.

In the United States, a similar nationalistic impulse fueled a movement among folklorists to recover the unique American roots of traditional culture. During the early and middle years of the twentieth century, folklorists looked to American balladry to illustrate the American character and history as distinct from those of Europe. Folksong scholars employed oral history interviews and field collection methods to compile collections such as Malcolm Laws’s work on Native American balladry. John Lomax, and later his son Alan Lomax, looked to the folksong and lore of occupational, criminal, and African American groups to demonstrate the existence of a vibrant lower-class American culture—again as distinct from a passive European peasantry.

Twentieth-century linguists also were interested in the history of various items of folklore and particularly in traditional narratives and their component parts—motifs—in order to test theories about the spread of language over space and time. Scandinavian scholars developed what became known as the historic-geographic or Finnish method to search for the “ur” or prototypical form of a traditional narrative in order to trace the path of transmission. The American scholar Stith Thompson finished the work of Antti Aarne and published his multivolume motif index. Later scholars have tended to disregard the historical

impulse that inspired the Finnish School and instead use the motif index to show how tales and fragments of tales from different cultures resemble each other.

Thompson, like American anthropologists, also looked to the folklore of indigenous peoples to demonstrate theories about the development of cultures. He focused on the transmission of narrative motifs and still employed analysis of texts as they existed over time; but others, such as Franz Boas, Melville Herskovits, Ruth Benedict, and other students of Boas, tended to take into account only “factual” history in their investigations of cultural psychology and social organization. Unlike many cultural anthropologists, however, certain folklorists who utilized a psychological or cultural approach continued to employ historical analysis to elucidate the continued relevance of traditional narratives—from blood libel legends to European *Märchen*. Alan Dundes and Jack Zipes in particular have fruitfully employed an examination of beliefs, legends, and folktales as they have developed over time to elucidate the persistence of anti-Semitism and divergent national identities.

During the middle years of the twentieth century, a new sort of historical analysis was coming into vogue, one that focused on the past and traditions of everyday people as opposed to those of the elite. During the 1930s, the Federal Writers’ Project sponsored surveys by folklorists such as Benjamin Botkin, Zora Neale Hurston, Alan Lomax, Herbert Halpert, and others. Their goal was to collect and record on cylinders the lore of working people and that which exemplified regional culture. Hurston, for example, did considerable work collecting the folk history, songs, and narratives of African Americans in her native state of Florida. Best known for her fiction, Hurston used folkloric accounts of the past to construct a feminist critique of Southern life during the first half of the twentieth century.

At the same time, anthropologists were taking a renewed interest in the history of the peoples they studied. Ethnohistory, a scholarly account of a culture group’s past (often before the time of contact), though recognized as a field in the early 1950s, did not come into vogue until the 1960s and 1970s among anthropologists who had come to recognize the fictive and ahistorical nature of the concept of the ethnographic present. Although such scholars as Bronislaw Malinowski and A. R. Radcliffe-Brown themselves engaged in historical researches in the 1920s and 1930s, their students tended to disregard history in the service of discovering the function of cultural practices and the structures of social institutions. Anthropologists such as E. E. Evans-Pritchard reemphasized the importance of historical research for anthropologists, but most scholars since have tended to emphasize economic, social, and psychological structures when they have looked at traditional cultural practices.

Even though such theoretical analyses did spur advances in one direction, they begged the question of change and development among individual societies—as opposed to the evolutionary stages of human society. Although scholars were

slow to realize that oral tradition among both nonliterate and literate peoples actually recorded a very specific view of the past, anthropologists and folklorists eventually recognized that the native view of history was critical to understanding motives and actions in the present.

During the egalitarian 1960s, folklorists began to employ the techniques of oral history as well as library and textual sources to learn about context and function. Those who have developed the most useful theories and models have disregarded the anachronistic anthropological notion of the ethnographic present and incorporated folk and oral history from their informants into their investigations. Richard Dorson, who came out of an American civilization background at Harvard, was particularly interested in the historical development of American folklore and American and British folklorists. His book-length studies of those developments became as seminal as the work of Wilgus in explicating how folklorists came to study and theorize about their discipline. Dorson may be best known among folklorists for his use of archival data to unveil the existence of fakelore employed by lumber companies, which promulgated the legends of Paul Bunyan for commercial motives. Lynwood Montell's groundbreaking oral history of Coe Ridge demonstrated the rich possibilities available to folklorists who investigated living memories. Henry Glassie's studies of both architecture and later of Irish traditions also employed the techniques of oral and folk history to elucidate the function and context of traditional processes. Although his perspective is reminiscent of that of nineteenth-century romantic nationalists, Glassie's explicit political analysis of folk history was part of the focus on cultural empowerment and authenticity that emerged in the 1980s.

Also working in the 1960s and relying on a communications model, Dell Hymes shifted the focus of folklore research to performance studies in which context and audience as well as aesthetic criteria were the topics of study. Richard Bauman added a historical component to this approach by using records of oral performances by seventeenth-century Quakers as case studies. His use of archival texts to test an explicitly ahistorical theory reintroduced the notions of process and time. Bauman's work, combined with that of Roger Abrahams and Américo Paredes in the 1970s, resulted in a series of studies examining the historical development of perceptions about group identity. Works by Paredes, Bauman, Abrahams, and José Limón laid the groundwork for studies of authenticity and politics and the relationship of folklore to those issues.

Folklorists and anthropologists are not the only ones who have investigated the history of traditional expressive culture. Historians, particularly those of the *Annales* school in France and from the History Workshop and Manchester University in England, have looked specifically at folkloric items and events to construct cultural histories of European society. Emmanuel LeRoy Ladurie, Eric Hobsbawm, George Rudé, Natalie Davis, Robert Darnton, Peter Burke, Bob Bushaway, E. P. Thompson, Raphael Samuel, Peter Laslett, and Paul Thompson

are just a few of the social historians who have noticed the persistence of patterned behaviors and the commentary on them by contemporary peoples in their letters, diaries, and memoirs. Unfortunately, most of these historians, because of their Marxist perspective, tend to take the view that folklore is always dead or dying, and they use that notion to prove that modernization, industrialization, urbanization, and particularly capitalism were responsible for destroying the old world of reciprocal responsibility between classes. Though none of those historians seems to have read any folklore studies, the analytic perspective is reminiscent of the folklore/fakelore debate; in the social historians' analyses, however, authenticity and invention are opposed with little comprehension of the complexities of how traditional processes grow and change.

Barbara Babcock edited the seminal work that combined historical and symbolic analysis of folklore in the 1970s, but it was not until the mid-1980s that other folklorists picked up on her direction and insight. Studies by folklorists interested in the relationship among politics, tradition, and display events and those concerned with the construction of ethnic and regional identity have engaged specifically in examinations of the historical roots and contexts of traditional enactments. Such studies both shed light on more general theoretical problems central to folklore, such as perceptions about authenticity and tradition, and provide some of the most creative elucidations of unique historical processes, which have in turn contributed to broader cultural discussions on the development of social identity in a multicultural society.

Rachelle H. Saltzman

See Also Euhemerism; Evolutionary Theory; *Gesunkenes Kulturgut*; Historic-Geographic Method; History, Folk; History, Oral; Myth-Ritual Theory; Philological Approach; Romantic Nationalism; Transmission.

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Historic-Geographic Method

A research method developed for the study of folklore in the 1870s, based on the comparison of variants and aimed initially at the discovery of the original form, place of creation, and age of a given item of folklore, as well as its local redactions and pathways of diffusion.

The Roots and Development of the Method

The historic-geographic method—also known as the comparative method or, especially outside the United States, the historic-geographic method, the Finnish method, and the typological method—was born in Finland during the 1870s in the initial studies of Julius Krohn and their continuation by his son Kaarle Krohn. Julius observed that the greater the distance between two places, the greater the differences in their respective folklore. Further, differences and commonalities in oral tradition from one locale to the next could be studied profitably in terms of geographic distribution and spread.

The method was based on the text-critical approach of philology, aimed at determining the relations between extant manuscripts. Using this approach, for instance, the critic attempted to ascertain whether Manuscript A derived from Manuscript B or whether the two represented wholly independent developments. On the basis of such judgments, the scholar could then deduce the possible origin and authorship of a given narrative.

It should be borne in mind that the application of this method to folklore, as outlined by Julius Krohn, only could occur on the basis of a sufficiently large corpus of collected variants. Finland proved an ideal laboratory for studying the method in practice since both Finland and Estonia had amassed immense folklore archives as a product of romantic nationalism. In Krohn's time, these archives consisted primarily of folk poetry, although many *Märchen* texts had been collected there as well. Finland also was situated at the crossroads of eastern and Western Europe, making it the recipient of influences from many places, and finally, the Baltic-Finnic region itself contains many distinctive cultural subregions, each with its own folklore.

Other intellectual movements of the day influenced the initial development of the Finnish method as well. Already in the first decade of the nineteenth century, German romanticist scholars had pursued the possibility of reconstructing the

core of ancient mythology on the basis of extant folk beliefs. Current folklore and belief were seen as the shattered fragments of a once-coherent system. This devolutionary premise was countered in turn by the late nineteenth-century development of evolutionary theory, which persuaded scholars that human expressions began as scattered and unrelated elements and gradually evolved into broader and more coherent entities.

Kaarle Krohn transformed his father's so-called local-historical method into the Finnish comparative method. In the process, the findings of experimental psychologists were brought to bear on the topic, especially their studies of the laws of retention and loss of memory. Krohn conceived of the development of folk poems as beginning with simple, isolated themes that subsequently underwent a long process of growth and change. Later, he proposed an entirely different theory of the development of Finnish folk poetry in his major study, *Kalevalastudien* (1924–1931). According to this later view, the heroic poems had been composed in their entirety in western Finland, undergoing transformation and devolution in the eastern tracts, where they had survived into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In either case, however, the pathways of development were regarded as completely predictable, demonstrable on the basis of extant evidence. The phenomena were reducible to general patterns and laws.

The historic-geographic method was formulated to study the migration of folklore and was evolutionist in the sense that it sought to apply Darwin's theory in detail to folklore itself. The discovery of mechanical laws of development became a prime goal of research in all of the humanities during the nineteenth century. Diffusionism is a broad-based research perspective that seeks to explain similar features shared by different cultures as signs of earlier contact. It engendered many similar approaches parallel to—but independent of—the Finnish method in the folklore research of other countries as well.

The historic-geographic method has become so broadly and variously adapted, however, that we can no longer speak of a single method but rather must include differing methods, researchers, and schools of thought associated with it. The so-called typological method replaced the geographic element by the 1930s. In this later development, redactions are determined on the basis of formal typology rather than geographic provenance. Because all research contains an element of comparison, it becomes difficult at times to distinguish when a study is based on the historic-geographic method itself, on a later derivative research trend of refinement, or on some entirely unrelated method.

The main purpose of the Finnish method was to use existing performances of folklore—a folk poem, *Märchen*, belief, or other item—to determine its original form, contents, idea, or core. During this early period of folklore study, researchers were less interested in what the item meant to its present performer than in where it originated and how it had spread in the past.

UR-Form

The original, archetypal form, or in folk narrative research, the first form of a narrative from which all known variants emerged; the archetype version that provides a model and pattern for all variants (alternatively, Urform). The term comes from the German *Urform* (plural, *Urformen*), meaning primitive form, original form, or archetype, and is derived from *Ur*, the mythological first city.

The search for the Ur-form of oral narratives is of particular importance in Finnish or historical-geographic methodology. In this approach, it is believed that an oral narrative originates in one geographic and temporal location and spreads from there. The variants of the Ur-form spread through a process called wave diffusion, wherein the kernel narrative, the Ur-form, travels in ever-widening geographic arcs from its locus of creation. This diffusion occurs via contact with other groups through group migration or through other avenues such as commerce, war, or assimilation by another group.

The Finnish or historical-geographic method holds that an oral narrative and its variants are the result of a single conscious act of creation at a specific time and location. The Ur-form of a given narrative can be deduced by deconstructing the known variants to get to the kernel form. What results from these studies is an exhaustive list of known variants of a particular narrative. From these lists, the researchers then attempt to peel away the successive layers of time and geography to get to the Ur-form. Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* and the Aarne-Thompson type index of folktales are good examples of the kind of collection work involved in this methodology. American folklorist Archer Taylor and others held that this method of folk narrative research was commonsensical and that it provided a scientific method for finding the Ur-form of any given narrative.

The concept of the Ur-form is based on the theory of monogenesis, or one point of origin. The early proponents rejected notions of polygenesis, the idea that there could have been several loci of creation for a given type of narrative, each independent of the others. They also rejected antidiffusionist arguments that narratives could not overcome linguistic barriers and thus insert themselves into the traditions of a group that was not linguistically related. The Swedish folklorist Carl von Sydow believed that rather than one Ur-form, there existed a multitude of Ur-forms, or regional oikotypes, which melded together to create one international Ur-form.

More recent criticism has focused on the literary versions of narratives. The argument posited by Albert Wesselski was that literature impacted the spread and form of narratives to such a great degree as to render the search for an Ur-form invalid. More recent criticism has focused on newer forms of mass communication, as well as on the concept that these narratives could and did arise through polygenesis. In this fashion, von Sydow's regional forms combined to make an international Ur-form become the concept of a Normalformen, an accepted base or kernel form for the narrative.

Randal S. Allison

The historic-geographic method promoted and assumed an international orientation. In 1907, the Finn Kaarle Krohn and Dane Axel Olrik founded an organization entitled the Folklore Fellows, whose series of scientific publications—Folklore Fellows Communications—continues today. Many of the most influential folklorists of the day were students of Krohn, leading to even greater cooperation and exchange. Notable in this respect are Walter Anderson of Estonia, Bertalan Korompay of Hungary, Séamus O'Duilearga of Ireland, and Archer Taylor and Stith Thompson of the United States.

The basic concepts of the method are the *variant*, *normal form*, *hypothetical original form* (*Ur-form*), and *redaction*. The last term is subdivided into the categories of *subredaction* and *base redaction*. Different recordings of a given folk poem, legend, proverb, or other item are designated as *variants*; even separate performances from the same performer are distinguished from each other under this rubric. Variants that seem to resemble one another more than any of them resemble other collected variants are grouped under the term *redaction*. As an aid to dealing with a large number of different forms, the folklorist constructs a “normal form” of the folklore item, bringing together the central or most salient features of the item as reflected in the corpus of texts. Sometimes, the reconstructed *Ur-form* of an item is identical to the normal form of a given period.

The purpose of redaction analysis is to discover the relations between different redactions and hypothesize an *Ur-form* or “original core.” The primary or secondary nature of a given feature of a redaction or variant could be ascertained through reference to certain criteria for originality, developed by Walter Anderson. For instance, an older element could be recognized by its numerical prevalence in the collected texts, broad geographic distribution, unusualness of detail, logical fit with other old features in the reconstructed text, archaic features of language or style, and aptness as a possible source of other later developments.

A secondary feature could be recognized by its narrow geographic distribution, occurrence with other alternative features, lateness of collection, or closer fit with other genres or items of folklore. A tradition does not usually develop in the reverse direction—that is, it is unlikely that features running counter to a late, local version would prove to be original. The researcher also must take into account that the age of a feature under investigation may differ from the age of the item of folklore itself. Distinctions or connections between redactions could be observed through content or motif indexes, charts of features, or cartographic methods.

The historic-geographic method has undergone many modifications and innovations over the course of the twentieth century. It is sometimes impossible to determine the original form of an item of folklore—for example, a folksong—if the item never possessed a fixed form at the outset. Initially, folklorists assumed that the method could be applied mechanically to all genres of folklore; later, the different “life histories” of various folklore genres became recognized.

In the study of *Märchen*, the work of Antti Aarne proved very significant. Aarne's type index, *Verzeichnis der Märchentypen*, published in 1910, became the basis of international folktale research. The numbering system contained in Stith Thompson's enlarged and reedited version of the index, published in 1961, remains the internationally accepted standard for the field. In his *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, Thompson further sought to classify and index all narrative motifs, in other genres as well as in *Märchen*. Type indexes of *Märchen* and other narrative genres represent valuable tools for historic-geographic research, and the Folklore Fellows Communications series alone has published some 49 separate indices of this kind. The same typological method has been applied to other genres as well (e.g., Archer Taylor's systematized catalog of riddles, Matti Kuusi's index of proverbs), aiming at the elucidation of the relations of different variants over space and time.

Märchen, because of their relative length, proved an apt genre for the application of the historic-geographic method: They were international in distribution, and their types could be characterized readily. Walter Anderson's 1923 *Kaiser und Abt* (Emperor and abbot) was one of the classic applications, after which a long series of other monographs appeared devoted to specific *Märchen* or legend types. Typical examples are Jan-Ovind Swahn's *Tale of Cupid and Psyche* and Anna-Birgitta Rooth's *Cinderella Cycle*. The method has been applied to riddles, games, and legends. Of comparative studies of proverbs, Matti Kuusi's monograph on proverbs related to the co-occurrence of rain and sunshine (*Regen bei Sonnenschein*) has provided the greatest breadth. The author carefully determined the genetic relations of an international collection of variants.

In Finland, the typological method was aptly suited to the study of epic and lyric folk poetry. Matti Kuusi's major work has been to further the historic-geographic study of this genre through redaction analysis. Using this method, Kuusi discovered stylistic periods that could be differentiated from each other by formal features. He placed a large portion of the collected folk poetry in the oldest stylistic category, ascribing it to a period extending from the arrival of the Finns in Finland to the beginning of the current era.

Cartographic studies and folklore atlases, a side development of the historic-geographic method, became popular in the 1930s under the influence of German *Volkskunde*. Cartographic methods are useful for representing essential similarities and differences in redactions in all kinds of genres, oral as well as material. The map always requires some explanation, however, since diffusion not only occurs as a simple product of geographic proximity alone but also reflects historical and economic relations, religion, cultural differences, and, occasionally, temporary or nebulous factors. For example, the study of cultural similarity or difference through the quantitative comparison of proverbs is an area of historic-geographic research pioneered in the study *Proverbia Septentrionalia: 900 Balto-Finnic Proverb Types with Russian, Baltic, and German Scandinavian Parallels* (1985).

Redaction analysis can bring forth a picture of the typical singing style of a given area. With this picture as a reference point, it becomes possible to examine a singer's own improvisation or typicality of repertoire on a line-by-line basis. Groundwork of this kind also contributes to the study of collage-like techniques of composition. The personal styles of *Märchen* raconteurs also can be characterized with reference to norms of narrative performance specific to a given area and recognizable through historic-geographic analysis.

Appraisals

The historic-geographic method was criticized from the outset, and many critical characterizations have helped hone and strengthen the theory. It has been claimed that researchers do not pay enough attention to literary influences, although the study of a given folklore item itself generally began with the scrutiny of written and “nonauthentic” sources. Scholars have been criticized for paying too much attention to geographic aspects and too little to historical ones—for example, overlooking the possibility of vertical diffusion. The best results have been obtained when the method has been applied to folklore within a single language area; international and global connections usually prove more speculative. Although the method stresses careful attention to detail and great exactness, the conclusions of historic-geographic studies sometimes have been (somewhat maliciously) characterized as claims to scholarly clairvoyance, especially when charting diffusional pathways on a global level.

Although the historic-geographic method always has been informed by its own issues, it is nonetheless only a scholarly tool—a system of characterization that can be used as the basis for a variety of different kinds of study. It has been used too generally and for purposes for which it is ill suited. Often, the method's harshest critics have relied on the method itself as a basis for arriving at their viewpoints, rendering their criticisms more like adaptations or by-products than real challenges. Such can be said, for instance, of structuralist approaches, which represent but one of many analytical frameworks suitable for the study of folklore.

The contribution of the Finnish method to folklore research is to be found not only in the range of applications offered for redaction analysis but also in the method's insistence on consistent, scientific criteria as the basis of research. Scholars aimed at the goal of completeness in collection and analysis, preventing them from drawing conclusions based solely on a handful of selected examples. All source materials must be carefully considered and ranked according to accepted criteria. Further, the argument, once assembled, must be presented in such a way that any other scholar trained in the method could reach similar conclusions. The notion that another scholar should be able to reach the same conclusions on the basis of the material presented and principles followed remains important today.

Although the historic-geographic method is often viewed as a somewhat antiquated product of turn-of-the-century scholarship, it is evident that the significance of folklore can never be adequately described without knowledge of the cultural influences impinging from the surrounding milieu.

Leea Virtanen

See Also Historical Analysis; Literary Approach; Motif; Philological Approach; Tale Type.

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History, Folk

A community’s collective perceptions about past events. Every folk group has its own notion of the past, which influences the thoughts, actions, and perceptions of its members. Although often used as a synonym for *oral history*, *ethnohistory*, and *oral traditions*, the term *folk history* is distinct in that it involves a collective perception about what the members of a group determine to be significant about the past and about how that past affects the present. In contrast, oral history pertains to a group’s or an individual’s commentary and recollections about events

the interviewer deems important. Folklorists are interested in a group's perceptions about its past because they contain and provide the context for all kinds of folklore, from traditional crafts to aesthetic expressions, as well as providing in-group perspectives on what has been culturally meaningful over time.

A folk history is not the same as a life history. A single individual's oral narrative, for example, does not necessarily constitute the accepted version or versions of a self-identified group. Folk history is also not merely ethnohistory, an account by scholars of a group's history before contact with outsiders. Rather, folk history encompasses a *community's* beliefs and evaluations about particular occurrences, rationales about why particular events were critical to a community, and explanations as to how particular events have affected the present. Although folk history is passed along through oral tradition, not all oral tradition is folk history, for the latter includes a range of customary expressions that have more to do with artistic meaning or passing along a skill than with a chronicle of past events. Not all folk history is found in oral tradition, and certainly, it is not found exclusively among nonliterate peoples. Diaries, letters, the media, novels, and memoirs, as well as formal historical texts, constitute sources for folk history, for all provide a specific perspective that can be found to impart a group perspective on significant historical events.

Unlike historians, folklorists do not regard folk history simply as another document to be validated or dismissed, as a document used to support or exemplify other data, or as a last resort in the absence of other sources assumed to be more reliable because they are in print. Unlike anthropologists, folklorists do not regard folk history as the sum of informal unwritten recollections or as the official narratives of the elite among non-Western cultures. Instead, folklorists rely upon a range of sources, including specific narratives about the past and the implicit evidence found in folksongs, anecdotes, legends, memorates, and personal experience narratives to examine the in-group view of circumstances and the contextual meaning of symbolic expressions.

Although folklorists, like anthropologists, seek cultural patterns in their field data, there is more of a tendency among folklorists to accept the information given at face value. Neil Rosenberg noted that historians provide their own interpretation of the past, whereas the goal of folklorists is to understand their informants' perspective. Like historians, folklorists tend to regard traditional history as a conscious expression on the part of their informants rather than considering it, as many anthropologists do, as the key to unconscious structures and thus to social, linguistic, or economic systems. Indeed, they even regard the performance of folk history as a significant text in and of itself and analyze its structural and aesthetic similarities to other forms of folklore.

For any group—national, ethnic, occupational, geographic, religious, or whatever—folk history provides a representation of the past. Such representations can justify motives and actions, explain social structures, and establish an alternative

worldview. Although outsiders may view folk history as downright fabrication because it may contradict the dominant story of the past, the debate over those in-group perceptions is often couched in terms of legitimacy and authenticity or about whether the dominant or the minority view of events and motives is correct.

Although some scholars have posited that folklorists collect while historians interview informants, such a dichotomy is more theoretical than actual. Contemporary folklorists probably spend more time in the field than do oral historians, becoming familiar with community members and their culture, but they also engage in directed interviews as well as in a more general “collecting” of texts. In recording folk histories, the field-worker encounters many versions and pieces of a story from informants. Narratives may vary according to the age, gender, occupation, or status level of the informant. After several narratives have been heard, however, the elements of a coherent story emerge. No one person knows or relates the entire tale, but different informants can confirm, validate, or temper the perceptions of other group members.

Folk history, like oral history, has carried a fair amount of political baggage, which has worked over time to diminish or heighten its value. Viewed by many as the history of “the people”—oppressed, marginalized, or otherwise discounted—folk history has tended to be regarded as the province of leftist scholars. Richard Dorson, who received his training in American civilization, particularly objected to this characterization, which grew out of the leftist intellectual movement of the 1930s, and noted that “the folk” often hold conservative views about the past that differ considerably from those of the scholars who romanticize about the folk. Two of Dorson’s students, Lynwood Montell and William Ivey, produced notable studies of community history that demonstrated the value of traditional, albeit nonarchival, sources. Interestingly, in commentary by anthropologists and historians on the topic, neither man is recognized as a folklorist but is instead regarded as a historian.

The particular contribution of Dorson, Montell, and Ivey, as well as Henry Glassie, was to demonstrate that the authenticity of folk history rests upon its depiction of what is significant in the past for members of a community. Hence, recent analyses by folklorists of Native American histories, occupational and community studies, studies of wars, and even analyses of performance events have made it their aim to reconstruct a past from the perspective of in-group members. Whether a particular side represents freedom fighters, patriots, rebels, or revolutionary insurgents depends upon whose folk history provides the rationale for recounting significant events. Such a perspective has been paralleled by the works of the *Annales* school of French historians who focus on meaningful structures in history, by British social historians who investigate how different groups construct their pasts, and by American cultural historians who seek to uncover the perspective of those viewed as not significant by the dominant culture.

Historians, anthropologists, and even folklorists have not always accepted the value of folk history as a legitimate account of the past, rather, they have regarded it as, at best, something that can fill in the blanks in the absence of more “reliable” accounts or, at worst, as a misrepresentation or downright falsification

of what has occurred. Like other genres of folklore, it has been regarded as fictive filler, as an invention, or as re-creation. In fact, there are common structural elements or motifs in folk histories that are similar to those in local legends, anecdotes, and personal experience narratives. And familiarity with such motifs and/or the ability to spot probable structural patterns is necessary for a critical use of folk history. Yet rather than revealing the unreliability or inauthenticity of folk history, the very patterns and repetitious structures and motifs of community histories reveal the culturally significant data they carry and transmit. Furthermore, the collection of folk histories of a community at different periods and from different sources can reveal, as do more standard historical sources, the ways in which a community's or a status group's perspectives on the past (and thus on the present) change over time. Careful attention to folk history can therefore reveal the logic for revitalization movements, riots, massacres, wars, and other apparently "irrational" and traditionally patterned behaviors.

Rachelle H. Saltzman

See Also Historical Analysis; History, Oral; Invented Tradition; Legend; Life History; Memorate; Personal Experience Narrative.

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History, Oral

Spoken narratives recounting and commenting upon significant past events. Folklore fieldwork inevitably involves collecting narratives about the past, but not all that is in oral tradition is oral history. Although many folklorists use the

terms *oral tradition* and *oral history* synonymously, historians make the distinction between conducting formal interviews with directed questions and collecting verbal traditions that comment directly or indirectly on historically significant events.

For oral historians, historical significance resides in what scholars or other recognized authorities determine to be important to the society at large. Thus, oral narratives about John Kennedy's assassination or the depression are appropriate topics, but individual or community recollections about a local murder or mining disaster are relegated to the realm of folk history. The latter, in contrast to oral history, provides commentary on what members of a socially "insignificant" group believe to have affected their lives. Although such distinctions exist, most folklorists have disregarded them in practice and used the directed methods of oral history to elicit full-fledged narratives as well as commentary about locally and nationally significant events.

It was the advent of the tape recorder in the 1940s that made documenting the words of regular people possible for those not in the broadcasting or recording industries. In 1948, Alan Nevins founded the Columbia (University) Oral History Collection to record the testimony of "great men" on their works, instead of relying on the evaluation of obituary writers. According to folklorist Neil Rosenberg, not until the 1960s, however, was oral history regarded as more than a supplement to the written record; in fact, the transcripts, not the tapes, were believed to be the important documents. The Oral History Association, founded in 1966, heralded the recognition that oral history was a special approach and not just a technological development. Oral history, which documents recent history that would otherwise go unrecorded, also gained popularity in reaction to the quantitative methods of social and labor historians in the 1960s and 1970s. Records of the lives of everyday people provide the human side of "scientifically" constructed statistics.

It could be argued, however, that the real shift in historical approach to sources occurred during the late 1930s and early 1940s, when members of the Federal Writers' Project set out to interview people from all backgrounds and occupations about their experiences during the Great Depression and at the start of World War II. Folklorists such as Benjamin Botkin, Zora Neale Hurston, and Stetson Kennedy collected life histories of common people, of the "inarticulate" classes. Ralph Ellison, Richard Wright, Alan Lomax, Herbert Halpert, Studs Terkel, and others also were involved in the Federal Writers' Project, recording vernacular speech and lore as well as the average person's views on what was significant about the 1930s.

In 1966, in an address to the Oral History Association, folklorist Wayland Hand noted that folk legends and beliefs were particularly important sources of the history of the common man because such traditions provided oral history with a time depth. Richard Dorson, writing in 1970, expressed the need to enlarge the scope

of oral history to include folk history. He emphasized, as did his students Lynwood Montell and William Ivey, the need to record a community's view of what was and is important in its past—not just commentary on elite categories.

Jan Vansina drew a further distinction between oral history and oral tradition by specifying that the latter consists of verbal messages from the past beyond the present generation; oral history consists of recollections and commentary about events within the informant's lifetime. Thus, oral history can be regarded as comparable to written documents, media reports, and so on that involve a first assessment of events. Because such narratives may be repeated or recorded at a temporal distance from the original event, however, the interviewer needs to be aware that memory, selection, elaboration, condensation, and the use of formulaic motifs as well as cultural styles of performance can all affect the historical account. Such factors become even more apparent with folk history, which may consist of reports passed along from previous generations.

Folklorists can provide a valuable perspective on oral history analysis because of their familiarity with the processes of oral traditions. Combining the methods of oral history with that of folklore collecting can serve as a corrective to culturally irrelevant questions on the part of the researcher. Ivey's study of local history in Michigan's Upper Peninsula particularly made the point that faulty methodology can skew the data. He noted that when he stopped asking the directed questions of the oral historian and began asking his informants to tell him what was significant for them, he elicited historical commentary that was far more relevant to the lives of those he was studying. That such data pointed to different or complementary interpretations of events, or when significant socioeconomic change occurred, only served to reconstruct a broader and more authentic history.

Montell's ethnographic study of Coe Ridge, which combined the sources of oral histories, local legends, anecdotes, ballads, letters and diaries, and archival research, further demonstrated the necessity of gathering data from whatever is available to reconstruct a community's folk history. He also made the critical point that oral histories are valuable historical documents in their own right and not just merely supplements to the written record.

Folklorist Henry Glassie specifically described folklore as the discipline that recorded the story of events and people that history had forgotten. In 1970, Montell noted that oral folk history consisted of a core of truth with narrative embellishments. The historical distortion that occurred could be attributed to patterning, telescoping, and legend displacement. Montell stressed that oral folk history provided a complement to written historical literature, for it added the human side and presented the individual as a person—a perspective usually absent from written documents.

Scholars from the fields of anthropology, history, and folklore suggest that what each has in common with the other is the oral interview. More than that,

however, they share the philosophical perspective that oral interviews can elicit the stories of those ordinarily unheard by most of society. Dorson and Glassie particularly made the point that folklorists ought to be more aware of the historical perspective of their informants. Ivey, Glassie, and Vansina further stressed that oral history records the psychological truth about a community's past and its beliefs about the present.

Methodology as well as philosophy is critical to studying oral history. The folklore and fieldwork guides of Kenneth Goldstein, Bruce Jackson, Edward Ives, and Peter Seitel provide recommendations for approaching informants, working with tape recorders, documenting contextual data, and eliciting usable narratives. Although the techniques of folklore fieldwork overlap with those of oral historians, there are some differences in perspective and purpose; thus, such manuals should be read in conjunction with Vansina's discussion of methodology in researching oral traditions.

Rachelle H. Saltzman

See Also Fieldwork; Historical Analysis; History, Folk.

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Holidays and Commemorations

Although *holiday* is derived from “holy day,” many American holidays are not religious observations but secular *commemorations* to honor and preserve the memory of a person or event. American holidays reflect a wide diversity of

cultural, ethnic and racial, and religious practices. Most holidays allow for a brief cessation of work, although many religious holidays are not observed by the wider public. American holidays are intimately tied to the consumerism that dominates other areas of American cultural life. In fact, most holidays would be unrecognizable without the trappings of the commercial material culture accompanying celebrations: from greeting cards and decorations to dress and food.

Other holidays once widely celebrated throughout the nation have disappeared from the national calendar. Bird Day (May 4), for example, was combined with Arbor Day (the last Friday in April) as a means to teach children the values of conservation. (Earth Day, instituted in 1970, revives these values by encouraging environmentalism and anti-consumption.) Still other holidays are celebrated on the state level and are growing in popularity. Juneteenth (June 19), or Emancipation Day, commemorates the end of slavery in the United States and is observed in fourteen states and many communities.

Federal Holidays

Commemorating the American Civil War (1861–1865) was the impetus for many of the national holidays now recognized in federal law. For example, George Washington (1732–1799) served as a figure to unite both North and South, leading to a national observance of his birth date. Abraham Lincoln



Fourth of July fireworks explode in the sky over Washington, D.C. (Tom2898/Dreamstime.com)

(1809–1865) was remembered in Northern states and Jefferson Davis (1808–1889) and Robert E. Lee (1807–1882) throughout the South. During the latter half of the nineteenth century, individual state legislatures, middle-class social reformers, African Americans, immigrants, and labor activists and socialists promoted causes through the recognition of a day of commemoration.

In order of their appearance in the calendar, these days set aside by federal law to commemorate events and people are: Martin Luther King Jr. Day (third Monday in January), Presidents' Day (third Monday in February), Memorial Day (last Monday in May), Independence Day (July 4), Labor Day (first Monday in September), Columbus Day (second Monday in October), Veterans Day (November 11), and Thanksgiving Day (fourth Thursday in November). As federal holidays, federal government offices and services are closed in observation of these commemorations. States are not required to recognize these commemorations, but all, in varying degrees, do.

Some of these federal holidays mark specific events in the nation's shared history, such as the patriotic observance of Independence Day, with activities from community religious services, public ceremonies, parades, and fireworks displays to picnics, baseball games, and other outdoor leisure activities. Other holidays commemorate the life and public service of the nation's leaders, such as Martin Luther King Jr. (1928–1968) Day and Presidents' Day, an observation combining in February the once-individually celebrated birthdays of Abraham Lincoln (February 12) and George Washington (February 22). Others demarcate military sacrifice, such as Veterans Day and Memorial Day, on which tributes of music, parades, ceremonies, and flowers are held at the nation's cemeteries. Labor Day, introduced by the Knights of Labor in 1882, observed contributions of the labor movement but has in the late twentieth century recognized the American worker.

National, regional, and state holidays and historical commemorations define and recognize the collective consciousness of the American people and, thus, holidays are sometimes the focus of debate. For example, the meanings of two holidays, Columbus Day and Thanksgiving, are today contended. Columbus Day, initiated by descendants of Italian immigrants to honor the arrival of Christopher Columbus (1451–1506) to the New World, was legally recognized as a federal holiday in 1937 by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1882–1945) at the behest of the Knights of Columbus. In recent years, Native American groups have protested Columbus Day, arguing that decimation of indigenous peoples by Christopher Columbus and other European explorers should not be celebrated. The celebration of Thanksgiving is based on a New England tradition but linked also to the English colonists of Plymouth, Massachusetts. These "Pilgrims" shared a festive meal with Native Americans in 1621. The modern Thanksgiving, replete with a "New England" meal of turkey and cranberry sauce, pumpkin pie and stuffing, was promoted by Sarah Josepha Hale (1788–1879), editor of *Godey's Lady's*

Book, as a means by which the nation could unite in the midst of the Civil War. President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed the observance in 1863. Full of historical inaccuracies, Thanksgiving has been criticized for its simplistic rendering of the complex relationships between Native Americans and European colonizers.

Public and Commercialized Holidays

The historical development of many commercialized holidays reflects a variety of traditions in their celebration and the importance of consumerism in American culture. St. Valentine's Day (February 14) is a recognized holiday in the Roman Catholic calendar commemorating two martyrs named Valentine. The symbols of Valentine's Day reflecting images of the Roman god of erotic love, Cupid, typically depicted as a young winged boy equipped with quiver, bow, and arrows, are often used on cards and other decorations. In the United States, Valentine's Day (as it is commonly called) became a secular holiday marked by small handmade gifts, and by the mid-nineteenth century, cards and gifts were manufactured specifically in observance of friendship and love on that day. By the early twentieth century, the holiday was celebrated in schools, workplaces, and homes. Since the 1980s, other "holidays" introduced by the card, flower, and gift industries imitate Valentine's Day: Secretary's Day (now Administrative Assistant's Day, the third or fourth Wednesday in April), the idea of an advertising executive; and Boss's Day (October 16), instituted by an insurance industry employee, also recognize changes in the workplace as well as between work and social life in the United States.

Mother's Day (second Sunday in May) was created after West Virginia native Anna Jarvis (1864–1948) sought recognition for the holiday. It was first celebrated in 1908, as was Father's Day (third Sunday in June). A presidential proclamation in 1914, linking through the display of flags the commemoration of mothers to the sons they lost in war as World War I (1914–1918) itself began to rage in Europe, cemented the holiday's place in the national calendar. Promotion by department store magnate John Wanamaker (1838–1922) ensured its celebration through the wide availability of manufactured cards, gifts, flowers, and candy.

Halloween (October 31) was a European folk tradition marking the shift from late summer and fall into winter, but in the early twentieth century it became increasingly commercialized. The holiday has grown to be a nearly national celebration of manufactured costumes, elaborate house decorations, adult and children's parties, and an increased consumption of "trick or treat" candies. Criticisms of the holiday, mostly from fundamental Christians, focus on its folk ("pagan") roots, which persist in the symbols of witches, ghosts, and animated pumpkins.

Religious Holidays

In recent years, official (that is, in the form of school and work breaks) notice of religious holidays has shifted from a Christian-centered tradition to one encompassing

Santa Claus

The modern folk hero of Christmas consumerism originally went by various names in different countries and has a long and complex history that probably began with the Norse winter god, Odin. The Christian version is based on St. Nicholas ("St. Nick"), said to have been a fourth-century bishop of the city of Myra in Asia Minor. "Santa Claus"—increasingly just "Santa"—is an American term that began to influence British usage from the 1870s. However, in the English form of "Father Christmas," the figure was known in the fifteenth century, when houses were opened up at Christmas time with the cry, "Welcome, old Father Christmas." He went underground during the Cromwellian period, along with many other folk customs, but was brought back to life in the Restoration of 1660. He has been with us ever since, receiving various boosts to his image, such as the ballad "'Twas the Night before Christmas," composed in 1822 by the American clergyman Clement Clark Moore. In 1863, Thomas Nast drew an illustration for Harpers Bazaar magazine that portrayed "Santa" as a jolly, tubby man in white whiskers, wearing red, with a wide leather belt, smoking a pipe, and carrying gifts. The modern Father Christmas had arrived. In the 1930s, an advertising campaign for the Coca-Cola Company further developed these essentials into the jolly, round figure we know today, a figure spread around the world by the ever-more-influential channels of the mass media and its commercial imperatives.



Saint Nicholas arrives to an eager audience of children in an illustration for Mary Mapes Dodge's *Hans Brinker, or the Silver Skates*. (Edna Cooke and Maginel Wright Enright, illustrators *Hans Brinker, or the Silver Skates*, McKay, 1918)

There are numerous other similar folk figures, including the French Père Fouettard, who accompanies the Bonhomme Noël, and the German Knecht Ruprecht. Dutch tradition supports the figure of Sinter or Sante Klaas, who rides a white horse and is accompanied by two “Black Peters,” young boys with blackened skin dressed in page uniforms.

Graham Seal

other religious traditions. Christmas (December 25), marking the birth of Jesus, and Easter Sunday (late March or early April), marking the resurrection of Jesus, were often the only religious holidays for which accommodations were made, but today Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, and other religious traditional days are increasingly noted.

Though little observed in the first two centuries of European settlement in North America, the celebration of Christmas in the United States since the mid-nineteenth century has become a thoroughly commercialized event. Much of the nation’s retail industry’s profit is derived in the shopping season commencing on the day after Thanksgiving through Christmas Eve, symbolized, perhaps, by the appearance of Santa Claus at the end of the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day parade. The trappings of the modern Christmas, with its decorated and lighted tree (dating from the 1820s–1850s), Santa Claus, holiday lights, greeting cards, and, of course, wrapped presents, serve as material evidence of the secularization of the observance.

Ethnic Holidays

Holidays reflect the cultural diversity of the nation’s population. Ethnic celebrations are regional, marking culturally and historically immigrant groups’ settlement in the United States. Some of the more common include Chinese New Year (sometime between January 21 and February 19), Mardi Gras (February/March), St. Patrick’s Day (March 17), Cinco de Mayo (May 5), and Kwanzaa (December 26–January 1).

Mardi Gras (French for “Fat Tuesday”) combines religious tradition with a carnival or festival to welcome spring, held the last day before Lent begins (usually sometime in February), although the parades and parties can start after the Christmas season ends. The most notable Mardi Gras in the United States is Carnival in New Orleans, Louisiana, with the parades and parties; it may be considered a minor version of Carnival in Brazil and in other Latin American countries. Mardi Gras is a state holiday in Alabama and Florida, and a holiday in eight Louisiana parishes.

St. Patrick’s Day is observed in cities, mostly in the Northeast, with a large population of Irish Americans. St. Patrick’s Day parades are held in New York City, Boston, and Chicago and are often venues in which politicians serve as honorary parade marshals. Cinco de Mayo marks Mexican independence in 1862.

Parade

Traditionally defined as a public procession, usually of a festive nature and accompanied by music. Historically, the parade was often a military affair, a public display of militia marching off to war or reenacting past victories.

The difference between a parade and a procession is not merely semantic, for the two types of public linear display are distinct and separate entities. A procession is typified by its formal nature, usually with the participants moving in an orderly succession. Processions are often expressions of the prevailing religious or political ideology of the community.

The modern-day parade, however, is made up of several components that distinguish it from other public ceremonies. The parade has a secular ritual component that expresses community values and sentiments. It is also a spirited and malleable form of festival. In this capacity, the parade functions as a public spectacle, providing the vehicle for positive group interaction between both participants and observers, thus promoting social cohesion and reinforcing group identity within the community. This is accomplished through certain traditional devices. These devices sometimes include myth or parody that subliminally conveys the political message of the parade's participants. Thus, the parade symbolizes the social and normative structures of the participating groups.

Since the Middle Ages, two types of parades have emerged side by side, expressing a tension between the established order and more marginal groups: the institutionalized parade and the alternative parade.



During the Chingay Parade in Singapore that celebrates the Chinese Lunar New Year, gaudily and fantastically dressed performers are transported on a mechanical elevator platform, 2009. (Jeffery Koh/Dreamstime.com)

The *institutionalized parade* is often characterized by conservative and socially acceptable themes, and it relies more on the use of conventional symbols, particularly metonyms. This type of parade reaffirms civic pride and notions of order and respectability.

The *alternative parade*, by contrast, is influenced by the inverse world of carnival. This type of parade is often characterized by parody, fantasy, and sometimes licentiousness. The carnivalesque nature of the alternative parade allows the participants to hide their true identities behind fictive ones through the use of mask and costume, thus creating an atmosphere of ambiguity. The movement of the alternative parade is also less rigid than that of the institutionalized parade, for the participants may exceed the boundaries of the street to intrude on more private areas, whereas in the institutionalized parade, the boundaries of the street are strictly observed.

The parade is thus both a presentational and a representational event that empowers its participants and reinforces group identity within the community. The parade is also adaptable to the changing needs, values, and beliefs of the group or community over time. As Igor Stravinsky implied in his symphonic suite *Parade*, the parade is truly an expression of renewal and is symbolic of life as it marches on.

Georgia Fox

Local celebrations are not limited to the Southwest, where there is a high concentration of Mexican American population, but occur throughout the nation. Kwanzaa is celebrated by some African Americans. *Kwanzaa* is a Swahili word meaning “first fruit of the harvest,” and the holiday occurs annually from December 26 through January 1.

Specially designated months honor racial and ethnic groups. These months are usually observed with speeches and special events, and all are heralded by a proclamation by the United States president, noting their particular significance. These are: Black History (February), Women’s History (March), Asian Pacific American Heritage (May), Hispanic Heritage (September), and Native American Heritage (November).

Martin J. Manning

See Also Belief, Folk; Folklife; Tradition Bearer.

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Hybrid

An analytic term referring to a cultural form, expressive behavior, or identity that exhibits features thought to originate from two or more distinct realms. In general, hybridity emerges from the mixture of elements that are either culturally or formally distinct.

Culturally distinct features come from folk, ethnic, or culture groups. Examples of cultural hybrids include identities such as *mestizo* (a term for individuals who are of mixed European and American Indian descent) or whole traditions such as Vodou (a religious system that emerged from the combination of African, American Indian, and European traditions). Formally distinct features come from genres, forms, or practices. Formal hybrids include specific genres like the prose poem (which combines features of both prose writing and poetry) or combinations of style such as that found in polkabilly music (which is a form of music originating from the Upper Midwestern United States that combines Norwegian, Irish, Slovenian, Swiss, and Old-time musical styles). As these examples suggest, terming something “hybrid” emphasizes its novel integration of disparate features instead of its exhibition of established ones. This emphasis has deep roots in the origin of the word, and it has resulted in both positive and negative associations.

The English word *hybrid* comes from the Latin term *hibrida*. In its most ancient meaning, the term referred to the offspring of a domesticated sow and a wild boar. The boar was emblematic of a masculine ideal in ancient Roman culture and was prized and respected for its power. Later, the term was used to refer to powerful individuals who acted in Roman institutions but were not of Roman birth. On the one hand, the dual identity of these individuals gave them the power to act in multiple realms and bring new ideas to the table. On the other hand, they were marked as “foreign” and thus not “truly” Roman (Howard 2008, 204). In this sense, the Latin word designated an individual as powerful. However, that power was imagined as subordinate to the more “pure” forms of the Roman establishment in the

sense that it was “wild” or outside the normal power structures of Roman society. In this sense, the *hibrida* was respected but also potentially feared and distrusted by the establishment. Because she or he was the source of fear, the *hibrida* may have been seen as needing extra oversight and control.

As the term came into use in biological sciences in the nineteenth century, it generally referred to new forms of plants. In this context, it located the powerful nature of the hybrid in the quality of heterosis or “hybrid vigor”: the tendency for hybrid organisms to develop features better adapted to their environments. As human genetic science emerged in the late nineteenth century, however, the term began to be associated with ideas of racial purity. In this context, the hybrid was perceived negatively as a “half-breed” or “mongrel” and was considered inferior to more “pure” individuals. The term entered into use for cultural analysis from linguistics where it was first used to designate words that combined elements from two or different languages. Later, it was associated with the “pidgin” or “creole” languages of the European colonies that combine entire other languages. Because of the association between language and culture, the hybrid came to also refer to the mixtures of dominant and subordinate cultural groups that characterize the twentieth and twenty-first century’s postcolonial political structures.

As a result, the term continues to exhibit a problematic dual association. It is positive when it is imagined as containing particular vigor as a result of new adaptation. In this sense, hybrid expression emerges at the intersections of significantly different realms. By combining heterogeneous elements, individuals are empowered to engage in expressive behaviors where transformational forms allow new and diverse expressions and identities. From the most positive perspective, this expression can offer the subordinated elements of the hybrid the possibility for liberatory expression. Often, these sorts of hybrids are associated with the resistant acts of historically oppressed groups (Bhabha 1994, 361). The term, however, takes on negative meaning when it is imagined as carrying some “foreign” features into a previously “pure” realm. Also associated with disparities in power relations, the term’s historical association with biology, generally, and theories of racial purity, in particular, is felt by some to reinscribe the subordinated position of the supposedly “foreign” elements of the hybrid. By emphasizing the “newness” of the hybrid, the subordinated culture’s contribution is disassociated from its preexisting traditions and institutions. As a result, the subordinated cultural elements can be overshadowed by an emphasis on the established nature of the dominant culture.

Despite these concerns, the term continues to be useful for scholars exploring the complex new cultural forms and expressions made possible by the increasing globalization of the twenty-first century. With network communication and worldwide travel increasingly available, few traditions, cultures, or forms are untouched by the influence of others. Today, it seems that hybridity is becoming the norm instead of the exception. Imagined as ongoing and dynamic global

processes, hybridity can be seen giving rise to what postcolonial culture critics Appadurai and Breckenridge have termed “zones of contestation” where “national, mass, and folk culture provide both mill and grist for one another” (1995, 5).

Robert Glenn Howard

See Also Amerasians; Asian American Humor and Folklore; Ethnic Folklore.

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Hymn, Folk

Most generally, a song praising God and sung in a folk group. Folk hymns may be found today in two kinds of setting: as survivals of older (often quite elaborate) practices, usually among marginal religious groups or in folk revivals, and as comparatively informal and spontaneous music for worship both within and without the religious mainstream. In the United States, folk hymns may be found among various ethnic groups and religious denominations—Jewish, Islamic, African American, Pentecostal, Amish, Baptist, and so forth. Since the 1960s, in an attempt to attract youth, various mainstream churches have introduced innovations such as folk masses and original songs accompanied by guitars in the style of folk music revivals. Other mainstream churches have experimented with gospel music choruses characteristic of charismatic denominations. Marriage ceremonies written in part by the participants often have featured original or borrowed lyrics set to folklike melodies.

As a result of a research tradition in Europe and the United States, the term *folk hymn* has come to stand more narrowly for a particular type of Christian song whose tune exists in oral tradition. Irving Lowens defined *folk hymn* as a “secular folk-tune that happens to be sung to a religious text.” Indeed, the practice of setting Christian songs to secular tunes was endorsed by Martin Luther, who asked, “Why

should the devil have all the good tunes?” Lowens’s definition emphasizes that though the words of a folk hymn may remain unchanged over time and place, the tune exhibits the variations that one expects from oral tradition. Scholars have further distinguished folk hymns from various other types of Christian religious folk-song: *religious ballads* (folk ballads with religious texts, sung solo), *camp-meeting* and *revival spirituals* (folk hymns to which refrains and choruses were added in the nineteenth century), and *gospel music* (first-person texts that emphasize the Christian’s relation to Jesus, trials and temptations in this life, and the joys of heavenly homecoming in the next). In most cases, Christian folk hymn texts are products of eighteenth-century hymn writers, such as Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley. Many emphasize God’s grandeur and humankind’s depravity. The majority of tunes tend to be in gapped or pentatonic modes rather than diatonic.

Lining-out is practiced in some folk hymn traditions. In this antiphonal practice, which dates back to the seventeenth century, a song leader gives out the words to a line of verse by speaking, intoning, or singing them, and then the congregation joins the leader to repeat the words, more or less in unison, to an elaborate tune different from the lining tune. Lined-out folk hymns represent one of the oldest layers of folk music tradition in the United States. They can be found among the Amish, among Old Regular Baptists (and some United Baptists) chiefly in southeastern Kentucky and southwestern Virginia, and in many African American Baptist churches, where they are termed *meter* or *Dr. Watts* hymns. Another major folk hymn tradition in the United States is a tradition of singing conventions and gatherings using shape note songbooks. This is a part-singing practice (the notes are written in the songbooks in various geometrical shapes to aid in identifying pitch), in contrast to the unison singing of the lined-out folk hymn tradition. Shape note hymnody originated in a late eighteenth-century music literacy movement designed to supplant the lined-out “old way of singing.” Many of the tunes in the shape note songbooks existed in oral tradition when they were written down in the nineteenth century. Today, shape note hymnody is undergoing a revival, and singing conventions gather in most parts of the United States.

Musicological scholarship on folk hymnody has centered on the nineteenth-century American shape note songbooks, chiefly in order to classify and analyze the tunes and in an attempt to trace their histories. George Pullen Jackson pioneered in this area; Charles Seeger and Dorothy Horn employ more sophisticated musical analysis. Using a broader definition of folk hymnody and within a framework involving the study of performance and ritual, folklorists and ethnomusicologists have done historical and ethnographic research on living traditions, in which one of the chief attractions is a well-articulated body of native beliefs about the meaning of this music. Outside the United States, the School of Scottish Studies has documented a tradition of lined-out folk hymns (psalms) in Gaelic on the Isle of Lewis. Research of European folk hymn singing has been

particularly strong in Finland, where F. O. Durchman notated hymn melodies from oral tradition as early as 1837 and Ilmari Krohn began a systematic collection in the 1890s. Päivikki Suojanen's *Finnish Folk Hymn Singing: A Study in Music Anthropology* shows that the tradition remains very much alive.

Jeff Todd Titon

See Also Folksong, Lyric; Music, Folk; Religion, Folk.

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Icelandic Sagas

Anonymous prose narratives (*Islendingasögur*, also known as the Icelandic Family Sagas) recorded during the thirteenth century (ca. 1220–1300 CE) that purport to be objective accounts of the Viking or Saga Age (ca. 870–1050 CE) when Norwegian chieftains—ostensibly as a way of escaping the encroaching power of the monarchy—migrated to Iceland.

There they established a commonwealth that lasted until 1262–1264, when they submitted to the rule of the Norwegian king. Iceland converted to Christianity relatively late (1000 CE), making the 35–40 Sagas of Icelanders that have survived valued—but much debated—sources of information about pre-Christian or pagan society and social practices: laws and customs, dreams and omens, rituals and ceremonies, superstitions and supernatural beings, and games and proverbs. Although the origins of the Sagas of Icelanders are elusive, their plain and sparing language, their anonymous narrators, their attention to everyday matters, and their use of dialogue to create lively and memorable scenes suggest that their roots lie in oral tradition, hence their affinity with folktale narrative. The word *saga* (plural *sögur*) itself suggests these oral roots: it is related to the verb *segja*, to “say” or “tell.” There are many types of sagas recorded in Iceland in addition to those that we today call Sagas of Icelanders: sagas of kings, saints, bishops; legendary (or heroic) sagas of ancient times; chivalric romances; and contemporary sagas about the turbulent events of Iceland during the thirteenth century, when the Sagas of Icelanders were being recorded.

Had a thirteenth-century Icelandic left a description of how sagas were composed or recorded, it would have spared later scholars much effort and ink. During the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, Scandinavian historians, eager to document the early histories of their kingdoms, took the sagas at face value and relied on them as faithful transcriptions of local traditions that had been preserved orally until they were finally written down. The Latin alphabet was introduced and adapted for writing in the vernacular after the conversion to Christianity. The native runic alphabet used previously was suited only for shorter inscriptions. Longer texts or verses would have had to have been memorized and performed orally. Although the early view that the Sagas of Icelanders are reliable historical accounts has been overturned, there is still debate on the role that oral tradition played in saga composition.

Some scholars, proponents of the so-called bookprose view, downplay that role. They consider oral tradition as only one of many sources and claim that the sagas were literary products of medieval authors who merely used disconnected oral traditions as a way of lending an impression of authenticity to their mostly imaginative evocations of the past. These scholars emphasize the influence of other written sources available in Iceland during the thirteenth century: histories, genealogies, law codes, and other sagas, as well as foreign secular and sacred works that were imported to Iceland. On the other hand are scholars, adherents of the so-called free-prose view, who propose that longer prose narratives might have taken shape around the verses and local legends that had been preserved orally during the 250 years between the time the events took place and when the sagas were recorded.

Manuscripts

The most concrete evidence in this debate would seem to be manuscripts written on vellum (treated animal skin; sheepskin in Iceland). However, none of the original vellums of the Sagas of Icelanders have survived. A few fragments of vellum contain sagas dated to the latter half of the thirteenth century, but most of the surviving manuscripts are copies of earlier manuscripts made during the fourteenth, fifteenth, and even sixteenth centuries. Dating the texts is therefore problematic. *Egil's Saga*, one of the more biographical sagas, is organized around the life of an obstreperous poet (or *skald*) who feuds with the king and queen of Norway. This saga is thought to have been recorded circa 1220–1240, that is, before the commonwealth collapsed. Some scholars believe that the great Icelandic historian and chieftain Snorri Sturluson (1179–1241), who wrote the *Heimskringla* (History of Norwegian Kings) and a treatise on poetic verse and Norse mythology (*Prose Edda*, or *Snorra Edda*), also wrote *Egil's Saga*, but this remains a conjecture.

Verses

Sagas of Icelanders, like the kings' sagas, contain verses said to have been composed at the time of the events. They are often situated in a historical context, and the name of the poet is preserved as well. In his prologue to *Heimskringla*, Snorri claims that these poems were memorized and transmitted orally. But the dating of the skaldic verses recorded in the sagas is controversial. Some scholars have questioned the authenticity of the verses spoken and composed by saga characters and have suggested instead that the medieval author composed the verses. They point out that the archaic style and poetic diction could have been imitated by the authors, who composed the verses themselves to suit their prose narrative. Snorri Sturluson's *Edda* (ca. 1220) was probably written as a textbook instructing younger poets in the old pagan techniques and myths that were losing popularity and being replaced with newer forms. On the other hand, there are



Detail of a manuscript containing the Icelandic Sagas, written between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. (Arctic-Images/Corbis)

scholars who distinguish between “authentic tradition” and “oral tradition,” noting that the verses may not all have been composed in the tenth century by the people in the sagas but, rather, could have been composed orally after the events and become part of oral traditions about these historical people and events before the sagas were finally recorded. In support of oral tradition, these scholars find occasional conflicts between the verses and the prose in the sagas, conflicts that an author, if not bound by tradition, would have reworked. Even Snorri himself, they point out, at times did not necessarily understand the poetry he quotes.

Other Evidence

Although there is no concrete proof of the existence of oral sagas, other evidence is commonly offered in support of the freeprose view: (1) allusions in the sagas to saga telling and the naming of oral sources; (2) the availability and assumed common knowledge of saga tradition when Sturla Thordarson (1214–1284) revised the *Landnámabok* (Book of Settlements); (3) allusions to other, divergent oral traditions that undermine the notion of an author in complete control of his sources; (4) the recurrence of several notable Saga Age personalities in unrelated contexts; and (5) the parallel tradition of the oral, legendary (heroic) saga—translated, probably revised, and recorded in Latin around 1200 by the Danish historian Saxo

Grammaticus, who credits Icelanders as his sources of pagan Scandinavian history.

According to those who hold to the book-prose view, such evidence might be nothing more than the “authenticating” devices used by medieval authors with access to written sources and mere fragments of oral traditions. Scholars have mainly agreed that the most productive questions are those that ask what in the saga can be attributed to written sources and what to native tradition. Working saga by saga, scholars in the book-prose tradition have contributed much to our knowledge of the correspondences between sagas and the written sources available in the monastic institutions, the episcopal seats, and the Church farms of great families. Those who hold more to the freeprose view have used a structuralist approach to identify the building blocks of saga narrative. A six-part paradigm has been a popular and useful way of organizing the feud structure of many of the sagas. The events of the saga, according to Theodore M. Andersson, can be arranged in segments: an introduction, a series of conflicts, which lead to a climax, followed by revenge, a reconciliation, and finally an aftermath. This paradigm may have played a role not only in the way feuds were conducted during the Saga Age but also in organizing the events of the oral sagas, thus allowing them to be recalled and transmitted orally. Using a both-and approach, Carol J. Clover has ascribed the overall organization of the sagas—their convoluted way of weaving together various subplots—to a Continental literary aesthetic similar to the one found in French romances. The individual scenes making up the subplots are credited to native storytelling tradition.

Given the lack of more concrete evidence, the debate will perhaps never be resolved. In my view, the most persuasive theory of how this unique blend of learned and popular material could appear as fully fledged sagas, with such a consistency of style, structure, and worldview, must include the presence of a flourishing oral narrative tradition prior to the recording of the sagas.

Social Context

Egil's Saga is decidedly antiroyalist; it favors the independent farmer-chieftains who refuse to be intimidated by the Norwegian king, although they may be, like Egil, flawed heroes. The masterful *Njal's Saga* has a tragic tone; it leads the reader to lament the loss of the most-valued members of society when their lives get caught up in the tension between the old heroic values of honor and vengeance (associated with a decentralized, traditional system) and the new social ideals. These new ideals, emphasizing moderate and socially responsible citizens loyal to a centralized power figure, were ushered in along with the conversion to Christianity.

These two sagas demonstrate why the thirteenth-century Icelanders thought these traditions important enough to record—amid the turbulent events of the thirteenth century (called the Sturlung Age after one of the most powerful Icelandic

dynasties, the one to which Snorri Sturluson belonged), chieftains fought bloody battles to consolidate the power that was once distributed among thirty-nine chieftains into the hands of just a few. The Norwegian king and archbishop also entered the fray, and the chieftains struggled not only to win dominance among their peers but also to maintain local control against the centralizing power of both the Norwegian monarchy and the universal Church. The Norwegian archbishop's goal was to separate Church affairs from those of the state and bring the Icelandic Church in line with the laws and customs dictated from Rome. Prior to this separation, Icelandic chieftains had their sons ordained as priests and supported a native church that was integrated with the Icelandic power structures. The conflict came to a head in 1238 when Norwegian bishops replaced the Icelandic ones. Deprived of their control over the Icelandic Church, the strife between the chieftains grew so violent that some Icelanders thought, no doubt, that the best way to end the bloodshed and restore the peace would be to be ruled by a king. In 1262–1264, the chieftains surrendered to the Norwegian king.

Thus, the saga makers, witnessing the end of the commonwealth period and of the rule of the chieftains—who embodied this unique and local blend of sacred and secular power—would record what they knew of a vanishing era, one that began with the settlement of Iceland by their ancestors. Given the social context of the thirteenth-century audience (it is generally assumed that the sagas were read aloud from manuscripts to a socially mixed audience), one can see how some sagas might have been made to encourage an audience to resist the centralizing forces, while others were intended to offer solace to an audience as they watched an era come to its inevitable end.

Recent Scholarship

Prompted by studies of orality and literacy and how they overlap and interact within societies, Vésteinn Ólason and other scholars have recently viewed the Icelandic Family Sagas as a dialogue between the thirteenth century and the Saga Age. Taking into account this thirteenth-century context, sagas are read today as part literature, part social history. Influenced by the structuralist model that foregrounds the feud paradigm, saga scholarship in this century has emphasized feuding, honor and shame, law, and gender relations. Not surprisingly, the sagas that deviate most from the feud structure, *Vatnsdæla saga* (The Saga of the People of Vatnsdal) and *Eyrbiggja saga* (The Saga of the People of Eyri), have attracted the most attention among folklorists and anthropologists. These sagas are more collections of local traditions than literary products shaped by an author. This research has drawn attention to the mythic patterns, both pagan and Christian, that inform these narratives and pays particular attention to how societies deliver, control, organize, and store knowledge of the past for audiences in the present and future. These scholars note that whereas history functions as a

“myth” for literate societies (we tend to believe what we have read), myths function as “history” for oral cultures, and they thus study sagas as cultural artifacts. Putting history and fiction under one roof, they try to reconstruct the mental landscape of the medieval Icelanders by studying how they compiled and classified sagas and other texts, as well as how they conceptualized interactions between the natural and supernatural realms and human and mythic beings. Crossing modern genre boundaries, they compare historical and mythic narratives or legendary sagas and classical sagas to determine whether they share similar structural patterns and concepts and seek to identify the operative social and ethical norms during the times these narratives evolved or were received.

Saga scholarship has thus come full circle, but with a reverse: When serious study and collection of sagas began in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, even the most mythical sagas were scrutinized for whatever insight they might give on the early history of the Scandinavian nations. Now scholars are subjecting the most historical texts to a similar process with hopes of revealing the underlying myths of those same cultures.

Zoe Borovsky

See Also Culture Hero.

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Immigration

Immigration is the experience of leaving one’s home country and culture, whether by choice or by force, to move to and permanently settle in another. However, most newcomers to the United States and Canada distinguish between refugees (driven from their countries by political, religious, or economic persecution) and immigrants (who elected to leave their home countries). Many refugees dream of returning to their homelands, though they rarely do. Immigrants, in contrast, intend to stay in their adopted countries.

Immigration affects culture, traditions, language, spiritual well-being, and customs. Although finding jobs and housing and sometimes learning to speak a new language (usually English in the United States and Canada) are critical to newcomer women, issues of childrearing, cultural continuity, food, family health, education, cultural identity, and changing gender roles are also crucial. The challenge of living with a multiple cultural identity shapes most activities and decisions in immigrants' lives. Folklore genres such as personal-experience narratives, health and healing practices, cuisine preferences and food preparation, and textile traditions reflect immigrant life experiences. Additionally, it has often fallen to women to militate for social action in terms of immigration policies; the cultural capital that they carry based on these genres becomes invaluable in negotiating the new terrain for themselves and their families.

Women, mostly Chicanas and other Latinas, were instrumental in the huge marches and rallies of April and May 2006 opposing proposed legislation to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. Leaders emerged. The American debate about immigration and immigration reform affects women directly. Much of the work of organizing the protests fell to women whose experience and commitment once again led them to the forefront of the current social movement.

The impact of immigration differs greatly for women and men. The expectation that men will seek extra-domestic employment while women establish the home gives men immediate access to language acquisition and development and exposure to new values, resources, and social systems.

Along the U.S.-Mexico border, however, young women often migrate north to work as nannies or maids or in service-industry jobs. While the effect of moving away from the home culture can be devastating for anyone, for women coming to the United States and Canada from highly traditional societies, the transition can be soul-shattering. Immigrant women often feel isolated, not only by linguistic barriers and lack of social contact, but also because their children, who may be caught up in the fast pace of mainstream life in the United States, often drift away from them. Feminist scholars working with immigrant and refugee women have recognized the need to offer a space for these women's voices, and much of their work is rooted in or draws upon oral history and personal-experience narratives. Debra Shutika's (2007) work with immigrant women in Pennsylvania and Mexico and Christian Zolniski (2006) and others' work in California attest to the effects of immigration on women and families.

Perhaps due to the vacuum left when women have been de-territorialized through forced or chosen migration, immigrant women's stories often have subversive power to create community, preserve personal dignity, and redefine identity. For example, for some Italian women in North America, bawdy and risqué stories and jokes told only in the presence of other women provide a vehicle for criticizing the status quo without belittling the basic tenets of their culture.

Novels, poetry, and essays written by Amy Tan, Julia Alvarez, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Sandra Cisneros, and Eva Hoffman, among others, describe the “double otherness” (Zaborowska) of their experiences as immigrants and as women, and suggest ways in which their acculturation narratives challenge male-centered, dominant models of assimilation and integration. Yareli Arizmendi’s work with Sergio Arrau for the film *A Day without a Mexican* (2004) reminds viewers of the United States’ economic reliance on immigrant labor.

Amy Tan’s novels describe customs, rituals, folktales, recipes, and stories about intergenerational struggles between Chinese American mothers and their daughters. In *The Opposite of Fate: Memoirs of a Writing Life*, she clarifies that her work should not be construed as emblematic of a “pan-Asian American” experience, but rather as the experiences of one woman who writes about her Chinese American community as she remembers it. Yet, when she describes her mother’s experiences with stockbrokers and doctors, noting that bad treatment and lack of respect are the penalty for not speaking English in America, she is describing the experiences of most newcomer women. Most women arrive with skills and education, but find themselves in low-income jobs or secluded at home because they don’t speak the language. As a result, lack of respect and misconceptions about their intelligence and abilities tend to permeate their experiences.

One of the most prolific areas for the study of immigrant women is that of health and healing. *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*, Anne Fadiman’s (1997) poignant account of one Hmong family’s attempt to navigate the allopathic medical system in the United States, draws on personal interviews to reveal not only how language barriers confound a newcomer family’s efforts to understand treatment strategies for their daughter, but, more importantly, how cultural values and beliefs about health and healing are so deeply a part of the family’s worldview as to make American medical practices unfathomable. Fadiman’s ethnographic study offers a provocative look at the responsibilities of Euro–North American medical practitioners to pay attention to cultural differences if they are to be effective healers. Subsequent studies draw upon life histories to explore the pluralistic health and illness practices of immigrants, who may have deeply held beliefs about the interconnected nature of a person’s mind, body, and soul, a holistic approach relatively absent in medicalized healing practice.

Food and the ability to obtain familiar spices, herbs, and staples in order to feed one’s family is a powerful concern for most newcomer women, who seek to maintain continuity, reinforce cultural identity, and ensure the health and well-being of their families. A woman from Ecuador living in Pennsylvania said, “I try to cook the food from my country, but my kids won’t eat it. Sometimes I end up eating every day for three days the same thing. I do cry sometimes when I have to eat it myself and they request some American things. . . . They are rejecting my culture and that makes me so sad” (B. A. Jones). Feminists and other scholars have

explored the relationship between foodways and cultural identity, using recipe books as frames for telling stories of arrival and survival in a new country.

In recent years, scholars of feminism have begun to look at the relationships between the feminist movement and ethnicity. Some immigrant women, faced with new cultural and behavioral norms, challenge those of their countries of origin in order to achieve and maintain their autonomy in North America; some maintain or return to their original traditions to support political, religious, or cultural beliefs. For example, prior to the attacks of September 11, 2001, many immigrant Muslim women had put away their head- and body-scarves (*hijab*); some did so because veiling symbolized an older, more conservative perspective on women, and some so as to not stand out in their adopted country. After the attacks, however, many women chose to reclaim the hijab as a statement in support of their beliefs and to educate Americans about the depth and breadth of Muslim culture and religion.

Perhaps also in response to the 2001 attacks, increases in the number of criminal-justice units along the border have resulted in increased militarization of the Mexico-U.S. borderlands. The cultural capital of female agents—more and more of whom make up the ranks of the Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs Enforcement—is often matched against that of immigrant women. As a result of U.S. military interventions in Central America in the 1980s, there was an increase in immigration from that region; the women who were apprehended or survived without being detained often formed alliances and support groups. In San Antonio, Texas, Laura Sanchez, for example, established a community-based immigrant and refugee center to provide assistance to newcomers. Women immigrants have enriched and preserved their traditional arts by becoming tradition bearers, continuing their cultural traditions' practices and making sure that the young do not forget them. Hmong embroidery, Guatemalan weaving, and other material culture artifacts attest to the strength of the women's commitment to keeping their cultures alive in their new place.

Scholarly treatments of the experiences of newcomer women do provide insights, but novels, poetry, and collections of essays written by immigrant women themselves in their own voices offer powerful narratives that expose both the personal and universal realities of the immigrant experience and chronicle the impact of migration and immigration on traditional cultural expressions.

Amy E. Skillman

See Also Ethnic Folklore.

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Indian Folklore

Factors Shaping Indian Folklore

Ethnographically speaking, India is a cultural meeting place where four language and culture “families”—the Dravidian, the Indo-European, the Sino-Tibetan, and the Munda (Austro-Asiatic)—came into contact with one another, mingled and mixed over several millennia, and, to some extent, merged. The Munda linguistic/cultural group seems to have been present the longest but appears to have arrived and settled as a set of independent tribal populations, and in that level of

social organization they largely remain today in eastern India (Orissa and West Bengal). Then, we know from firm archeological evidence that some time around 2500 BCE, a level of socioeconomic integration approaching civilization based in urban administrative and rural agricultural production was established along the Indus River system. This set the stage for a folk-urban distinction and many of the sociological features, such as the caste system, that have played a major role in the development of what distinguishes Indian folk traditions.

Although we have no conclusive knowledge as to when or from where Dravidian lingual and cultural groups migrated and settled in southern Asia, many authorities hold that these developments were the product of Dravidian cultural influences. Recently, however, a number of Indian scholars dispute this. Just as the urban-based civilization arose and flourished during a period of about a thousand years from 2500 to 1500 BCE, the precursors to Indo-Aryan languages and culture brought with them new worldviews, a pantheon of new gods, and a hierarchical mode of social organization that established the preeminence of a priestly class, the Brahmins. These two language and culture families have largely merged with each other over the subsequent millennia. The fourth major body of cultural tradition, beginning perhaps as long ago as 2000 BCE, the Sino-Tibetan, came from the north and east, bringing what today we see as a welter of different languages and ethnic groups into the present Indian states of Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, and Himachal Pradesh as well as into the countries bordering India to the north and east—Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet, Burma, and Thailand.

Unfortunately, our attempts to understand India's ancient ethnohistorical processes have often been misguided, contentious, and hegemonically presumptuous. Earlier, nineteenth-century scholars trying to characterize and understand the diversity of traditions within the subcontinent emphasized the generic layering brought about by successive historical migrations. These older views tended to speak of culture in terms of race under the assumption that physical features compounded with mother tongue formed the basis of behavior and thinking and explained the differences among populations and their culture and folklore. In contrast to these racist conceptualizations, most scholars today recognize the significance of the blending and mutual borrowing that has taken place between these bodies of tradition over time. One of the first scholars to outline the details of this conceptualization with regard to India as a linguistic area was Murray Emeneau (1980). Making a clear distinction between race and culture, he points out that the languages of India have mutually influenced and borrowed from one another to such an extent and so deeply that they now tend to share more features with one another than they do with other languages of the family that lie outside of India.

There are many factors that combine to shape the folklore profile of a nation, and thus various dimensions could be used to characterize it. One factor, the number and heterogeneity of the populations' ethnicity (languages and cultures

within the four “families,” as broadly outlined before) suggests that South Asia has one of the richest, most varied populations in the world and has one of its most complex profiles. This is true. But another factor—how a region has been carved up into its present national boundaries—also affects the profile of its national segments. In this regard, because postcolonial contemporary South Asia tended to divide itself along ethnic and religious lines, the national profile of India is somewhat less complex than that of South Asia as a whole.

The homogenizing effect of major religions, with their canonical and linguistic hegemonic tendencies, constitutes a determining factor in another sense too. In this respect, the religions of South Asia differ. On the whole, Hinduism, India’s predominant religion, is usually regarded as a relatively tolerant one. It has tended to allow for considerable independent development of its folkloristic potential. Nevertheless, Sanskrit and the values associated with the philosophies of its priestly elite class, called Brahmins, have over the millennia tended to encompass and incorporate considerable local and ethnic variation and relegate it to the relatively lower status of “local,” “little,” or “folk” practice and belief. The indigenous, Sanskritic term for this distinction is *marga* (path, highway) and *desi* (provincial, country, local). The overall effect is sometimes seen as a top-down homogenization process called “Sanskritization” or “Brahmanization.”

As a fourth major factor, the nature and size of political units over time shape a region’s profile: as sociocultural entities increase their territorial boundaries, incorporating or annihilating neighboring sociocultural units, their cultural hegemony tends to lessen the region’s diversity and increase its homogeneity. India has been fairly normal in this regard, but over the millennia the net result has been a few large folkloristic territories, leaving only marginal areas such as mountain ranges and dense jungles where the indigenous cultures retain a high degree of independence. This process, the civilizational process or the “Folk-Urban Continuum,” is often summarized by means of social categories associated with different “kinds” of culture: “urban” versus “folk” or village (the agricultural countryside) versus tribal (isolated, remote, unincorporated). While most folklorists now realize folklore exists in all societal categories (urban, village, and tribal populations), folklore was once, in the minds of those who studied it, only found among rural agricultural peasants. Regarding this characterization of India’s folklore profile, what we see is an ever-decreasing “tribal” lore, a recently—but rapidly—decreasing “folk” lore, and the rapid rise of popular urban tradition, perpetrated through mass media and having short-term currency among specific urban-based social groups such as political parties, institutions of education, and religious and occupational groups. While Indian (even pan-Indian) urban lore is a vibrant body of tradition, it too will perhaps give way to a Western-dominated global tradition. But in this regard, India is not yet ready to relinquish its distinctiveness.

It is perhaps worth noting that defining “folklore” within India’s complex milieu of tradition has not been easy. During British rule when folklore studies first became popular, *folklore* was a term most often applied to the cultures of tribes and the lower, less-literate castes. In the 1950s when American scholars began to formulate their approach to the study of Indian civilization, they did so with the idea of a folk-urban continuum. Folk culture lay in the middle region of a homogeneity-heterogeneity continuum at one end of which are the so-called tribal cultures occurring widely all over the subcontinent, contrasted at the other end with a pan-Indian culture. At about the same time, Indian folklorists developed new terms in their languages to describe this level of tradition: *janapada* (*jan* meaning “people” or “of the people”) or *lok* (*lok* meaning “place” or “of a place or region”) to distinguish it from the earlier indigenous dichotomy of *marga-desi* categories. Although all folklorists working in the region at one time or another have suffered from the limitations these kinds of categories impose on their thinking, on the whole the mix of Western and Indian conceptual paradigms has created a balance, and dialogue at international meetings continues without undue confusion and toward significant mutual benefit.

India’s regional subunits, the states, have a primary (or at most a bipolar) core to their folklore profile. In different states, this core tends to be shaped by one or more of the factors mentioned previously. In the case of Kashmir, the core is bipolar along religious lines of Hinduism and Islam. In Orissa and Assam, on the other hand, the core entails a distinctive bipolar core of tribal and folk tradition. In other states, such as Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Bihar, the “folklore” core is centered squarely in a uniform village lifestyle, only now beginning to yield its distinctive character to the increased influence of urban and global culture. The states of Nagaland, Himachal Pradesh, and Meghalaya are cultural mosaics lying in jungle or steeply mountainous regions, composed of diverse, relatively independent, and distinct tribal groups, speaking different languages often belonging to different linguistic families. In this kind of situation each tribe (linguistically defined) constitutes an independent genre paradigm, with the commonality between them due not to the effects of homogenization but to a family resemblance retained through common cultural ancestry.

Caste

Despite a long history of reform movements and the many modern laws hoping to eliminate it or minimize it as a social force, caste (*jāti* or *kula*) is a reality throughout India. In Indian literary texts, another closely related term, *varna*, has been used for centuries as a four-fold categorization of the thousands of *jātis* that can be found throughout India. At base, both terms identify a named, hereditary identity group, with its members largely adhering to a set of practices that include such things as dietary food avoidances (see the later subsection “Food”),

manner of dress, specific customs associated with life cycle rituals, and a sense of communal pride embodied in legend and myth. In this sense, a caste is somewhat similar to an ethnic group, and its traditions and customary practices are something like ethnic folklore as may be found in many parts of the world. Besides being a dominant characteristic of folk society, caste pervades the folklore itself as a frequent motif, as a performer worldview that accounts for much of the variation between different versions of a piece, and as a determinant of who may and who may not perform it.

Although it might be an exaggeration to identify it as a system—let alone a pan-Indian caste system (as they may have been codified as *varna* in ancient texts)—the castes in a region do tend to see themselves in relation to one another, and many see in those relationships a hierarchy of status (rights and duties), which is actualized in the region's traditional sets of privileges and regulatory rules of conduct and assembly. Many of these sets of privileges and demeaning duties have been outlawed by modern legislation and are becoming irrelevant to life in the cities. Nonetheless, both caste (as a kind of social group) and caste relationships remain infused into all aspects of the folklore of rural villages and towns of every region.

Another dimension of folklore in India is the social specificity of performers and patrons or audiences. Not all forms of folklore are open to all people. Many traditions are carried by performers of a specific caste. For example, the performance of caste origin myths (*kula* or *jāti purāṇa*) are patronized by the members of that caste dispersed throughout the villages of a region. The performers are usually of a different caste, and their profession is to travel to the locations where the patron caste is found and narrate or enact (theatrically perform) the myth. The performers are supported (paid, remunerated, sustained) by the patron caste. The audience for such a performance may be primarily composed of members of the patron caste, but usually villagers of other castes come for the entertainment as well. Many kinds of village life cycle ritual performances such as weddings, name ceremonies, and funerals are of this nature as well.

There is also a large variety of itinerant performers who still travel the countryside performing their traditions door-to-door in villages and on weekly market days in the towns: acrobats, animal trainers, religious mendicants, singers, fortune tellers, and so forth. Most of these professional performers are members of particular castes but are known publicly by the name of their performance. While some regional drama troupes are also of this nature, most are not restricted to caste. Drama and dance performance requires many years of study and appeals to people of a certain personality, but it is generally not a caste profession.

Gender

Although there are a few folk traditions open to both sexes, for the most part, participation is segregated by gender, with many kinds of performance being gender

specific. Most dance and drama troupes, for example, are composed exclusively of men, some of whom assume female roles. Most professional epic traditions are performed only by men too. But tale traditions are broadly the dominion of women, especially those associated with ritual and moral duties such as the *vrat katha* (see the “Folktales” subsection) tradition. The Maitili house wall painting tradition was also originally a woman’s tradition, practiced by young brides in relation to the duties they are to perform toward their husband and his family and the resultant environment of prosperity they, as wives and mothers, bring to it. Song traditions associated with domestic life cycle ceremonies—particularly births, weddings, and funerals—are women’s traditions too. Generally speaking, public performance is the realm of men; domestic performance is that of women. However, in certain regions of northern India, for several of these life cycle traditions, *Hijras*—transsexuals and transvestites—also hold rights to come and sing.

Hinduism

Hinduism is a term originally applied only by non-Indian commentators for the religious practices, beliefs, and philosophies they found in India. (The label-words *India*, *Hindu*, *Hindustan*, *Hindi*, *Sindhi*, and *Indus* all derive from the same set perceptions.) Hinduism’s comparatively decentralized authority structure allowed for and to some extent acknowledged diversity and the difference between canonical doctrine and local practice, while some of the other religious traditions of India (e.g., Jainism, Christianity, and Islam) have been less willing to do so, claiming essentially that folk practice is more or less based in ignorance and misunderstanding and lies outside the purview of orthodox religion. They have thus not accepted folk religious traditions within their community of believers. They are usually relegated to the status of earlier belief and practice followed by the population before it converted to doctrinal social and moral codes and came to regard its previous beliefs as superstition, weakness, or vice. From a folkloristic perspective, however, there is a great deal of obvious and overt syncretization not only between pre-existing local custom and canonical doctrine but also among the different religious communities. It has been somewhat easier to study this phenomenon within the Hindu fold, and indeed the relationship between local and classical Hindu thought and practice pervades most of the work that has been done—to the extent that often the relationship between local Hindu practice and the influence and borrowing that has taken place between it and the other religious traditions (Islam, Christianity, Jainism, and Buddhism) remains ignored and unexplored.

Genres in Indian Folklore

Dealing with Indian folklore in terms of genre categories has stimulated the discipline of folklore to rethink some aspects of the way we label some kinds of

folklore, and it has greatly expanded our knowledge of the way society and performance contexts affect the nature of many genres. While some genres of folklore in the West have virtually disappeared as living traditions, and scholars have often had to content themselves with what remains preserved in literary tradition as a survival of oral text, those working in India where these genres continue to exist in vibrant living tradition can include the text's larger context, which often involves costumed dance, song, musical accompaniment, spirit possession, and a variety of highly meaningful ritual acts. This opportunity has enabled folklorists to define folklore in its performance context more fully and to investigate more closely what contextual factors drive the shaping of an oral text. Thus, along with a huge body of new material, new conceptualizations of folk genres and new methodologies have been developed, while old ones have had to be modified or abandoned.

Folktales

Once upon a time, folklore scholars thought India was the very source of the folktale as well the home of the vast majority of the tales themselves. It is now understood that this is not exactly the case, but it was in India (or at least the greater South Asia that was "India" at the time) that folktales were first collected, standardized, and aggregated into didactic literature. Some of the largest and most influential tale collections—the *Hitopadesha*, the *Panchatantra*, the *Jataka* tales, and the *Kathasarasagar* among others—were written or committed to memory and were carried along Buddhist monastic and Hindu mercantile trade routes north and east into central, eastern, and southeastern Asia, and west to Europe. These literary works provided not only form for the tales themselves but also a literary frame for the aggregation of tale collection and a characterization and reputation of the folktale as a medium for moral education. At least some of the oral narrative performance traditions seem to have been visualized in a variety of distinctive "picture story telling" traditions that then accompanied the spread of tale tradition from India throughout East and Southeast Asia and westward into Europe. Some of these developed into forms of marionette and shadow puppetry, scroll paintings, narrative picture boards, cloth wall hangings and mural painting, and so forth. In contemporary India this process continues into the mass media from its inception with the introduction of printing presses to the beginnings of India's comic books and children's literature. But folktales also thrive in oral tradition throughout the country. Increasingly, however, the oral tradition is being replaced with printed versions learned by educated children at home and in school. Nevertheless, everyone loves to listen to tales, and skilled tellers and their performances are still greatly appreciated and respected.

There are still a variety of occasions at which what we would call a folktale is in India a mandatory part of rituals. Most widespread of these is the *vrat katha* (*vrat* meaning "vow" and *katha* being the most usual term used for "tale" or "story"). Another very widespread, but probably modern ritual form in which a

tale (a specific tale) is mandatory is the enormously popular *Satyanārāyaṇa Puja*. The ritual (*puja*) may be performed at any auspicious occasion in hopes of general prosperity and well-being. And over most of southern India, one can find a popular recitational form called a *harikatha* (god's story). While the larger frame for this performance is an epic-length recitation in song of the life and deeds of a particular deity or hero, the song is interspersed with long commentaries based on accentuating the moral lessons to be learned from the hero's actions; further parallel examples are presented by way of well-known tales and extemporized commentary on contemporary politics and social mores. Aside from such formal occasions, family gatherings and bedtime are typically occasions for storytelling. In fact, in many of India's languages, the most familiar term for folktale is *ajji katha* (grandmother tales).

Folk Epics

By most definitions a folk epic is any long, sung narrative performed in the oral tradition. Even today India's two major classical epics, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, fit easily into this definition. And although before 1980 most of the folklorists of the world were familiar with only these two Indian epics, dozens of other epics all around the country have now been collected, published, and are

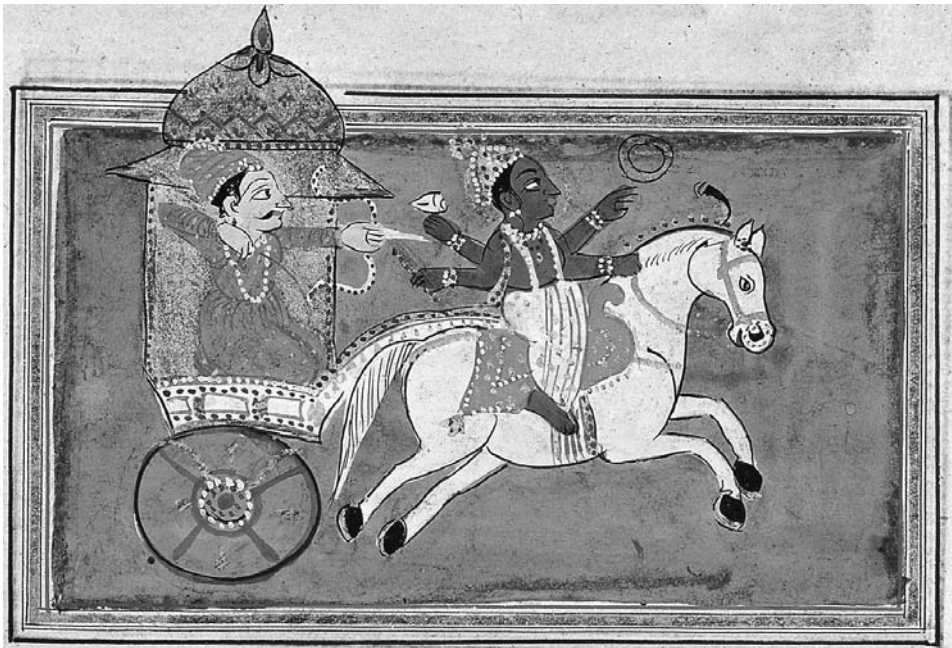


Illustration from the seventeenth century depicting a scene from the Ancient Indian epic *The Mahabharata*. One of the heroes, Arjuna, is in a carriage behind Krishna, who is mounted on a horse. (Jupiterimages)

available for study. None are as long as the classical epics—which, with the former consisting of over 100,000 verses and the latter slightly less, are the world's two longest epics. But many of the regional folk epics are very long, taking days, not minutes or hours to recite. But it must be kept in mind that in their performance forms, the classical epics too are presented in episodes. Only rarely and only in a few locations is a complete version of the epic presented.

Like other areas around the world, most Indian oral epic traditions are hero-based and center on great battle scenes. The heroes of most Indian epics, though, are gods, either incarnate human forms of deities (*deva*) or warriors (*vīra*) deified and worshiped by their communities after their heroic deaths. Epic performance traditions are thus often embedded within forms of religious ritual, some of which even include the hero's possession of a professional medium through whom he is able to dance and speak to the audience, receive honorific gifts, and convey his blessings and promise continued protection of the community from his spiritual realm. This is widely the case throughout southern India. The *Katama Rāju* and *Palnādu* epics of Andhra Pradesh, the many *bhuta kola* and *teyyam* traditions of Karnataka and Kerala, and the *Annamār Kathai* of Tamil Nadu are examples of this kind of performance. Another distinctive characteristic of Indian oral epic traditions is the prominent role given to females either as heroine and central figure of the epic, or as providing supernatural protection and assistance to the central male hero. This is as true of the northern *Alhā* epic of Uttar Pradesh as the *Annamār Kathai* of Tamil Nadu.

Not all Indian epic traditions are epics about warrior heroes. Some are more appropriately described as “Romantic” epics. The epic called the *Chandaini*, for example, narrates the tragic love story of Lorik and Chanda, and another, the *holā*, treats the love between Nala and Damyanti. Others deal with saints, or rather deities incarnate as spiritual leaders, and the deeds and miracles they performed to reveal their true identity and power and to effect moral precepts. The *Manteswāmi* and *Male Mādeshwara* epics of Karnataka are some of the most pure forms of this kind of epic, but versions of the *Panch Pīr* and *Rāmdev* epics of Rajasthan in northern India also have heroes who are clearly regarded as saintly teachers as well as protectors of the faithful.

One other notable feature of many Indian epic traditions is the props that are used in performances. Often their very presence is essential to the performance, even if they play no other function. In the bow song (*vil pāttu*) tradition of Tamil Nadu, a manuscript version of the story must be present even if it is never read from and the raconteur is illiterate. The bow (*vil*), too, from which the tradition derives its name, a ten-foot-long instrument with bells hung along its string, which jingle loudly when the string is struck with a stick, is also essential for the performance. Several epic traditions in northern India require a cloth on which the story is painted, such as the *pār* that depicts the *Pabuji* and *Devnaryan* epics of Rajasthan,

or the nine-yard-long scroll paintings accompanying the many caste *purāṇa* recitations of Andhra Pradesh. In some instances at least these painted story cloths are regarded as a sort of portable temple embodying the image of the deity or the patron deity of the hero. Similarly, itinerant singers of epics, such as the *Ellamma* epic, carry a “god-box,” a portable wooden temple containing an image of the deity with pictures painted on it depicting the god’s or goddess’s deeds.

Dance

India abounds in local dance traditions. Most of the well-known, named Indian dances depended on local royal and wealthy patronage and were nurtured within an elite class of audiences and thus exist on the boundary between folk and classical. Most of these have in common a strongly narrative quality, enacting through dance a series of pantomime gestural and postural representations of characters of myth and legend (drawing primarily from the classical epics, the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyana*, as well as other religious texts [*purāṇas*]) whose endearing behavior and qualities are familiar to the audience from poetic literature and song. In this sense, they are as much drama as dance and are often identified as “dance-dramas.” In some, musical accompaniment is provided only through instrumental means (particularly various kinds of drums), while others emphasize specific forms of semi-classical vocal music. *Yakshagana*, a dance-drama of Karnataka, combines all of these with impromptu spoken lines by the dancers in a form somewhat resembling opera in the West or the Beijing opera of China. Some, such as *Kathak*, accentuate complex foot rhythms, while others, such as *Kathakali* of Kerala, utilize highly refined traditions of facial and hand gestures (*mudras*). Yet others (e.g., *Rām Līla* performances in some locations) are virtually motionless, conveying the narrative they celebrate through a series of tableaux, centered on a procession involving the audience as well as the actors, or entailing circle dances in which the distinction between actors and audience is further blurred (e.g., the many forms of *Rām Līla*).

Many of these semi-folk/semi-classical dance traditions have roots in folk forms. Kathak, for example, now regarded as a semi-classical form open to all who wish to study it, was originally the purview of a caste of dancer-musicians who have been performing and teaching this dance style within their community for hundreds of years. Males of the Kathak caste were professional storytellers who enhanced their recitations with song and dance in order to attract wider audiences as they wandered from town to town. The origins of most of the dance forms still remain obscure, sometimes somewhat purposefully so. Bharatha Natyam, now regarded as almost a national dance form of classical nature, was once performed in south Indian temples and in some places by female dancers who were “gifted” to the temple and whose professional duties included sexual favors to the temple patrons. The association between temple dance and this kind of religious *devadāsi* service

(so-called “temple prostitution”) was once widespread and common in the social category of folk professions. It is still practiced today despite being outlawed.

Although many dance traditions are closely associated with religious narrative, many that are clearly in the folk category are primarily secular in nature too. Some of these are associated with seasonal activities, especially agricultural activities, or life cycle events such as weddings. Large communal dances are quite common in tribal areas. Most notable among these, and not confined to the tribal populations, are the circle dances of Rajasthan and Gujarat. *Rās*, to use a Gujarati example, is a circular dance performed by males who strike small sticks (*dāndiā*) against those of their partners. *Garbā* (also Gujarati) is danced by women clapping their hands. They go around an earthen pot called a *garbo* (meaning literally “womb”) that has tiny holes and a lit earthen lamp placed inside it, symbolizing the eternal light of the goddess Amba. During *Navarātri* (the festival of nine nights), the whole of Gujarat echoes with singing and dancing, the beating of the drums, striking of the sticks, and clapping of hands. Similar circle dances are widespread: the Kodavas of Karnataka, for example, have a number of variations on a “lamp dance” (*bolkot*), which include intricate circle dances by men using sticks and whisks and a dance called *umattāta* performed by women around a large oil lamp placed in the center of their circle. Generally men and women do not dance together or with one another, though this is now popular in urban nightclubs.

Songs

Sung narrative—epic, ballad, song cycles, and others—do not easily fit into Western categories. For example, folklorists label the Tuluva *pāddana* and Kerala Torram song traditions variously as epic, ballad, myth, and legend. Like many of the longer sung narrative traditions such as epic and ballad cycles, some of the shorter song traditions are religious songs. Indeed, these often depend on frequent allusions and reference to the epics and to literary works, but their emphasis here is on blending image with song in order to inspire a deeply devotional mood. The genre itself is called *bhakti* music. *Bhajan*, *kirtan*, *dahe* (a Muslim song tradition), and the Baul songs of West Bengal are traditions of sung poetry inspired by deeply religious and philosophical insight. On the other hand, there are many secular song traditions as well. Wedding songs, death songs (Tamil laments), birth songs (sung by Hijras), lullabies, popular film songs, and many others at best make only general or coincidental reference to religious themes.

Festivals and Celebrations

Religion pervades almost all Indian folklore genres as a dominant aspect. Likewise, but from a different perspective, we can see that folk religious gatherings and celebrations are times when many genres come together to form a distinctive set.

The most common component of all Hindu religious festivals is a *pujā*. This is a ritual that anyone can perform at home, usually in a shrine room, to an image (*murthi*) or photo of a deity or saint. It can take as little as a few minutes or as long as an hour or more, depending on the occasion. Daily household *pujās* are usually done by the man of the house after gathering flowers and food offerings on a metal platter and refilling oil lamps (these activities may be done by other household members) and after bathing and changing into clean clothes. The *pujā* begins with lighting the oil lamps and “awakening” the deity with a clap of the hand, a song, or just mentally. The image may then be bathed in water or in milk and dressed in clean cloth. An act called *ārati* is performed by encircling the image an auspicious number of times—three being the minimum—with a hand-held oil lamp. The *ārati* may be repeated with a variety of different lamps or with a plate holding incense, camphor, or flowers. Next, pure foods, such as raw fruits (a banana and coconut combination is most common) and sweet mixtures of grains, generally uncooked or mixed with ghee, are offered, usually using the same circular motion of the *ārati*, and “fed” to the deity by opening the fruit and spooning out a small amount of the prepared food. Often, then, a song (*bhajan* or *kirtan*) is offered, not so much as prayer but as sharing the pleasant recollection of those deeds and acts of kindness and protection fondly remembered by his or her followers and devotees. The plate of remaining offerings is brought or passed around to anyone present so that they may share that blessed by the deity’s “touch.” The short ritual ends with an act of obeisance by the worshipers.

Sacred places abound in the Indian landscape, and whole sets of narrative and ritual tradition aggregate into bodies of sacred geography. Sarnath, where the Buddha gave his first sermon, and other locations are part of an extensive geography of pilgrimage sites held sacred by Buddhists. Ayodhya, the birthplace of Rama, the hero of the *Rāmāyana* epic and incarnation of Lord Vishnu, has skyrocketed in fame as a pilgrimage site in recent times due to its disputed status as a holy site also for Muslims. The Ganges, of course, is a sacred river; and on it lies Banares (Varanasi), which, as the result of the coalescence of many historical and geographical factors, is a sacred place renowned for funerals and as repository for cremated ashes. It is a pilgrimage place that most Hindus wish to visit at some time in their lives. At the confluence of the Ganges, the Yamuna, and the invisible Saraswati rivers lies Allahabad, a medium-size mercantile city most of the time; but it is where once every twelve years some 45 million Hindus gather at a time to bathe. The world famous Taj Mahal has become the site of choice for urban Indians and as a modern day secular pilgrimage site for lovers and honeymooners. Apart from the sacred place itself, the destination of pilgrims, pilgrimage is itself a form of folklore. Replacing the well-known customs and practices associated with traditional pilgrimages are thousands of modern tour bus companies, a huge business providing Indian tourists with highly standardized tours to largely secular

locations in the natural landscape (ocean beaches, waterfalls, historical locations) in luxury buses outfitted according to modern, urban Indian expectations (including ultra-loud audio-taped music) and tour guides.

Processions are a widespread and common feature of many kinds of festive celebrations, including Hindu temple festivals, celebrations at a Muslim mosque, saint's day celebrations at Christian churches, funerals, and even political rallies. Processions are customary forms of gatherings, a folk form in themselves, but they also often include other folk forms such as acrobatic performances, costumed dance performances, troupes of musicians, carrying banners and flags, chanting slogans, singing songs, platform speeches, and a variety of folk rituals. In their turn, processions are often a part of yet more complex festival activities and celebrations. In India, processions commonly include placing the image of a deity on a cart (or a wheeled wooden animal such as a horse or a tiger) and pulling the cart through the town, neighborhood, or village, stopping at the houses of patrons to allow the women of the household to offer their worship at the doorstep. The deity's ride is analogous to (or symbolic of) a royal visit through the lord's realm, inspecting the state of affairs, a show of the lord's presence and blessing. It is also an honor to be a part of the team pulling the cart, an act symbolic of and analogous to one's devoted service to the deity. At the famous temple in Puri, Orissa, where a huge cart is pulled in procession of Lord Jaganatha ("Lord of the World," Krishna), it is not unusual that in the rush of people striving to pull the cart, some get crushed by the enormous wheels and die. They are blessed and go straight to the Lord's abode.

Festival days are either auspicious times in the Hindu calendar during which to do a special *pujā* to honor a particular deity or to celebrate the birthdays of or mythic events associated with particular deities. They are largely held as household or village celebrations. Examples include Holi; Dīpawālī ("festival of light" associated with the goddess Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity and fruitfulness); Navarātri ("nine nights" with a group of rituals associated with goddesses, especially Durgā) to be performed on different days, concluding with Dasara famously celebrated in the city of Mysore with a grand procession; Krishna Astami ("Krishna's tenth," meaning the tenth day of the lunar month on which his birthday is celebrated); and Ganapati Chaturti (Ganapati, the god Gaesh's fourth). Special foods are associated with each festival.

There is considerable variation in the way festivals are celebrated across the country, and some festival days are more popular in certain locations than in others. There are even differences in the way some castes and some occupations celebrate certain festivals. While in most parts of India women take the leadership roles in the nine-day series of rituals associated with the goddesses Durgā, Saraswatī, and Lakshmi during Navarātri, there is considerable variation in the particular customs and the kinds of gathering that take place. While almost all

over India people celebrate Dipawali by honoring the goddess Lakshmi with a display of lamps and lanterns, the farmers in coastal Karnataka celebrate it by constructing a shrine in their fields for Baliyendra, a demon conquered by the Vamana incarnation of Vishnu, and then calling him in the middle of the night. Some have rather dissimilar variations in different parts of the country. In northern India, Holi is associated with burning the demoness Holikā in a huge communal bonfire, role reversals that would be unthinkable at other times of the year, and wild splashing of one another with dye-colored water, but in the south it is associated with Parvati arousing her future husband, Shiva, from his deep state of meditation. And in Kerala women perform a ritual bathing ceremony symbolizing the death of Kāma, the god of love.

Food

A brief discussion of common folk food beliefs and customs and their associations with ethnicity and religion is necessitated by the fact that Indians themselves overtly and readily make these identifications. One of the most widely known “facts” about Indian culture is its practice of vegetarianism. What is not well known, apparently, is the reality that only a relatively small percentage of the population is vegetarian, and most of those are of a particular caste, Hindu Brahmans. Most other segments of the population eat meat. But here, the situation becomes more complicated—most Hindus will not eat beef. It is regarded as “lowly,” not because cattle are lowly or impure—quite the opposite: they are “sacred.” It is those who consume beef that are regarded as “low” and “impure.” The pig, on the other hand, is regarded by many castes (it is a folk tradition of those castes) as “low” and “impure,” and those who consume its flesh are regarded as impure. Muslims believe pork to be impure, but Christians do not. Among Hindus, on the whole, pigs are merely “disgusting” in their habits, and most Hindu castes proscribe its consumption. In parts of India some castes regard chicken as similarly dirty—indeed, almost all animals living among human populations have dirty eating habits—and proscribe eating their flesh but allow eating animals hunted in the wild. The animals preferred by those who permit the consumption of meat are sheep and goats, the latter preferred over the former for matters of taste. Clearly, eating food is a language of meaningful discourse and practice as well as of rivalry, contention, and religious and ethnic identity. And it goes much beyond this deeply into the social interactions of every day life.

Another dimension to food classification and eating is who cooks the food and how. *Pakka* food is that cooked in *ghee* (clarified butter fat, a product of the cow, held sacred by Hindus) and metal vessels (most preferably “higher class” metals: gold, silver, copper, and brass); *kacca* food is that cooked in water and earthenware vessels. *Pakka* food is associated with festivals and celebrations; *kacca* food is everyday, ordinary, home food. *Pakka* food is more widely acceptable than

kacca food. Somewhat similarly, food cooked by a higher caste person (Brahman being the highest) is more widely acceptable than that cooked by someone of a lower caste. The result is that the vegetarian food cooked in *ghee* and metal vessels by Brahmans is relished by the greatest number of people, making it the food of festivals and large gatherings. These kinds of food classification continue into the realms of vegetables and grains and processed foods. The system is summarized in a three-fold classification of food into *satvika*, *rajas*, and *tamas* foods.

It is also believed that the body, mind, and personality are formed by the foods one eats. Ultimately this theory is sometimes used to explain the personality characteristics of the caste (primarily *varna*) system. Another important classification of foods into hot and cold categories is used to explain causes of illness and the practice of medicine and cure. So, as we might expect, diet is carefully watched, and the women, the cooks of the family (mothers, wives, and sisters), watch after and protect their family's health in the foods they prepare. Many of these food preparations embody customary sets of ingredients balanced to contribute to the family members' health and prosperity. A knowledgeable woman, then, is like a goddess (the goddess Lakshmi) to the family.

Challenges of the Modern World

Folklore is never static—it is always changing and adapting itself to new situations and media possibilities. This is nowhere more evident than in India. The explosive growth of cities and the development of new technologies have brought many changes to the nation's folklore profile. Some traditions and even whole genres have waned particularly in rural areas, while others, especially traditions that have found a place in new media or have migrated to more urban environments, have expanded. New forms of transportation, particularly buses, have enlarged even rural forms such as festivals, fairs, and pilgrimages considerably.

Virtually all forms of popular oral traditions, for example, are available on audiocassette and are widely distributed for sale at festivals and shops in cities. Many stories derived from oral tradition have been enormously popular as cinema productions. Some of these even preserve elements of the oral traditional style and manner of performance. Virtually every state and language has made popular movies out of its regional epic traditions and regional mythical stories. In Tamil Nadu, for example, with film industry production rivaling that of many European nations, the tragic epic story of a brother and sister called Nallatangal and Nallatambi has been one of its longest running hits. Songs written for the film version of a local epic made decades ago in the Tulu-speaking region of Karnataka about warrior brothers Koti and Channayya are still popular today. And the *Rāmāyana* television serial brought the country to a standstill every Sunday for many months during the 1990s. While not directly derived from any of the huge diversity of oral

tradition productions, elements of these inescapably were brought into the series both unconsciously and overtly.

In such new media as these, traditional folklore has managed to overcome the forces of Western-based globalization at least temporarily. However, India itself is generating its own global cultural hegemony, and the force of this as an influence on folk oral tradition is both powerful and subtle, with some folksongs sounding more and more like film song productions, for example.

Not long after India's independence, Milton Singer wrote in the preface to *Tradition and Change*, "Modern nationalism in India has always shown a strong interest in the recovery or reinterpretation of India's traditional culture," and suggested, "The professional student of culture and civilization may contribute something to this inquiry through an objective study of the variety and changes in cultural traditions." This call generally has been met with enthusiasm by scholars. Many universities all around India now have folklore departments and offer degrees in folklore. Part of this is due to Indian states being established on the basis of language and regional pride, which resulted in folklore becoming a part of departments of literature that included the preservation and promotion of not only written literature, but also non-written arts preserved in oral folk tradition such as dance, drama, material culture, and song.

India's central government and most of the state governments have aided folk performance forms by providing monetary support to particular genre performances (especially dance-drama forms); supporting folk festivals (regionally and nationally, as well as internationally); recognizing, organizing, and listing bodies of state-licensed folk performers; and establishing state cultural boards. Equivalent to America's Smithsonian Institution, the Central Government's Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA; see ignca.nic.in/js_body.htm) in Delhi has a division devoted to the collection and analysis of folklore materials throughout all of India. The Central Institute of Indian Languages in Mysore also has a folklore division. More pragmatically, most states have established centers helping folk artists make the transition to new urban contexts and new urban patrons. Central and state folk arts and crafts centers have played a particularly strong role training young artists, providing design advice, and establishing distribution and sales outlets. Ironically, perhaps, these efforts have sometimes produced the undesirable results of a decline in the quality of folk crafts and a dependence by artists on politicians and the government rather than the folk as patrons of their art.

Some support for Indian folklore has also come from abroad. In 1985, the United States held a Festival of India, which brought many folk performers and craftsmen from around India to Washington, DC. The event, organized at the diplomatic level between the Indo-American Council in Delhi and the Smithsonian Institution, not only demonstrated tremendous world interest in India's folk traditions but also gave a great boost to the legitimacy of India's wealth of diversity in

folk forms, a legitimacy that has subsequently served to preserve them from annihilation in the face of widespread globalization. Similar festivals were held in a number of European countries.

Studies of Indian Folklore

The Ford Foundation has actively shaped folklore collection and scholarship in India with financial support for developing archival centers and international conferences and training workshops (a Web site listing of these centers may be found at <http://www.archive-india.org/abpitarc/memberlist.html>). Some of the most active folklore centers today are the Regional Resource Centre for Folk Performing Arts in Udupi, Karnataka State (see <http://www.udupipages.com/culture/rrc/html>), Rupayan Sansthan in Rajasthan, and the Archives and Research Centre for Ethnomusicology (ARCE) established by the American Institute of Indian Studies (<http://www.indiastudies.org>) in New Delhi, which is dedicated to collating, centralizing, and preserving collections made of Indian music and oral traditions scattered all over the world for use by Indian scholars and artists. The National Folklore Support Centre (NFSC; <http://www.indianfolklore.org/home.htm>) in Chennai, which also received start-up funds from the Ford Foundation, is currently coordinating many of the activities of folklore institutes around India. It has collaborated in conducting numerous all-India conferences held in various regional locations and has run numerous public programs educating the urban audience of Chennai.

Peter J. Claus

See Also Ethnic Folklore.

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Inscription

Signifies meaningful marks upon a surface. Narrowly conceived, the term *inscription* may be understood as encompassing graffiti, desktop inscriptions, carvings on trees, autograph rhymes, cattle brands, rebuses, tattoos, and rocks arranged to form letters on the Salt Flats in Utah. More broadly defined, *inscription* also may include the entire print tradition. For this entry, the term will be limited to uninstitutionalized and largely individual acts of making marks to convey meaning, the greater proportion of which is counter-hegemonic.

Farmers sometimes plow messages into their fields for aerial viewing and photography, and people stamp out SOS messages in the snow. Long ago, the cartoon tradition appropriated such inscriptions through its conventional representation of SOS with rocks on a tiny island with a single palm tree, emblematic of all deserted islands. The motives of such actions range from making political comments to conveying life-and-death concerns to producing humor. All such messages are culture specific.

What can be written on a specific blank surface with a specific implement differs significantly. How it is understood also differs significantly, often from one culture group to another. The traditional book inscription “Steal not this book, my trusty lad, / For fourteen bucks it cost my dad,” written with a pen in a textbook, signifies ownership when signed, not unlike the cattle brand A—X (“A Bar X”) burnt into the hide of a steer; both may also be seen as mutilation.

Personalized “vanity” license plates on automobiles represent a legalized means of playing within the limitation of the seven or eight alphanumeric allowed by various governments, and people are as inventive within that restraint as institutional censors permit. “4NIK8,” which makes use of the rebus principle, has been disallowed, but “TIHZ”—intended to be read in a rearview mirror—has been issued. Many vanity plates represent car owners’ initials, cryptic references to occupation (“BEEF,” “DRYWALL,” “TREES,” and “BOOZE”), or playful statements (“IYQ” and “IYQ2”). Like cattle brands, they mark ownership, and police report that stolen cars with vanity plates are more frequently recovered.

Of a more controversial nature is the current concern with “subliminal” messages and images in contemporary advertising, movies, videos, and cartoons. Much of this concern—and, indeed, a basis for the occasional acting out of this concern—may be traced to the popular books of Wilson Bryan Key and Vance Packard’s earlier *Hidden Persuaders*. These also buttressed popular concerns about verbal messages, such as “Paul is dead,” that some believe may be heard if one plays recordings of specific popular songs backwards. Certainly, on the cover of the video of Disney’s *Little Mermaid*, one may see the representation of a penis in the castle in the background, but why such a graphic image is present may be debated. However, there is little evidence that *Who Killed Roger Rabbit?* contains anything sexually explicit or that the word *sex* is represented in a specific scene of *The Lion King*. Such “readings” seem more often idiosyncratic rather than based upon specific marks upon cellular surfaces.

Forms of inscription less commonly known involve either the mutilation of coins or the appropriation of the means of minting to produce on metal discs images that are at variance with general understandings of what is appropriate. Coins have been mutilated to produce “love tokens,” often by shaving the minted images off one side and then engraving letters and images appropriate to a specific circumstance. More like the product of a minting process, “elongated” cents (and other coins) have been produced by running the coins through rolling machines that have various images and messages etched or engraved on their rollers. And those who mint one-ounce silver bars have known, for some years, that their surfaces may bear images and messages that make them of greater appeal to specific markets. Love tokens may be assumed to have been produced for specific personal circumstances, but elongated cents and silver “art” bars were produced for a specific event or a celebration of a specific place, despite their appropriation of mass-production technology. All three have often involved traditional images and messages.

Inscription may take many forms, such as printing particular letters in an otherwise innocuous passage in boldface to spell out a transgressive message or to represent a particular image. Meaningful inscriptions may be made upon almost any surface.

Michael J. Preston

See Also Autograph Book; Graffiti; Popular Culture; Rebus; Xeroxlore.

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Internet

The digital revolution in the last quarter of the twentieth century gave way to new means of communication, new ways of telling tales, and new dimensions in researching narrative culture, especially since personal computers and local networks became connected to each other in a worldwide Web called the Internet. In the 1980s, digital communication took off when a growing number of people were able to afford personal computers and modems and began using e-mail, joining mailing lists, and visiting newsgroups, such as Usenet. The 1990s brought many improvements to personal computers, modems, communication software, and Internet service providers. Not only could plain messages be sent by e-mail, but so could larger files with text, pictures, animated gifs (photos with moving details), and animation. Internet browsers such as Mosaic, Netscape, and Explorer were being developed; Web pages gained more visual features and symbols; and hyperlinks led to unprecedented intertextuality. Sites with discussion forums also appeared on the Web, and it was in this era that the first folktale collections and databases were published on the Internet.

In the twenty-first century, hardware and software became cheaper and faster. Chatting on the Internet became very popular, especially among children and adolescents. At first, conversations in chat rooms consisted of participants typing and sending text to each other, but software such as PalTalk and MSN Messenger made live chat sessions possible with the use of a microphone and a webcam. Meanwhile, mobile phones could function as small computers themselves, sending e-mail by Short Messaging Services (SMS) and mailing pictures and small movies by Multimedia Messaging Services (MMS). These mobile phone messages are good for sending jokes, riddles, and funny pictures. A new MSN and SMS language evolved, using abbreviations (e.g., lol = laughing out loud; CU l8er = see you later) and emoticons (smileys).

Within a quarter of a century, the possibilities for storing and exchanging folk narratives digitally have expanded dramatically, and technological developments



Young Estonians visit near a sign giving directions to an Internet cafe in Hüürü, Estonia. (EPA Photo/NIPA/Timur Nisametdinov)

have turned the world into a “global village” where English is the foremost lingua franca. The democratic medium of the Internet has made it possible for many to share their stories with others. Due to the Internet, tales travel faster than ever. A story can now be disseminated around the world in just a few seconds. The exchange of jokes and contemporary or urban legends is a popular pastime among youngsters and inside office culture. The enormous expansion of folkloristic and folk-narrative material on the Internet is making it more difficult to retrieve the information one is looking for, and therefore the importance of search engines like Yahoo and Google is increasing. It seems as if all information can be found on the World Wide Web. More data are added every day, and we sometimes tend to forget that data are changing, moving to other addresses, or even disappearing completely. A joke, a piece of Photoshop lore (a funny, manipulated digital picture), or a discussion on the subject of urban legendry can be here today and gone tomorrow. Google’s cache is often a last resort before folkloristic bits and bytes disappear permanently. The Internet even has a patron saint, who is, as far as legend goes, Isidore of Seville (ca. 560–636).

Folktale Collections

One of the earliest (1994) and still one of the finest folktale collections is the German Gutenberg Project, which as of 2006 contained some 1,600 fairy tales, 1,200

fables, and 2,500 legends (<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/index.htm>). The Gutenberg Web site includes, for instance, the fables of Aesop, the fairy tales of Hans Christian Andersen, a fairy-tale collection of Ludwig Bechstein, the *Decameron* (1349–50) of Giovanni Boccaccio, the fables of Jean de La Fontaine, the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (Children's and Household Tales, 1812–1815) and the *Deutsche Sagen* (German Legends, 1816–1818) of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, the *Volksmärchen der Deutschen* (Folktales of the Germans, 1782–1786) of Johann Karl August Musäus, fairy tales of Charles Perrault, and the *Deutsche Hausmärchen* (German Household Tales, 1851) of Johann Wilhelm Wolf. The English version of the Gutenberg Project contains several of these works in English, as well as the *Arabian Nights*, the French *Contes* of Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy, stories from Giambattista Basile's *Lo cunto de li cunti* (The Tale of Tales, 1634–1636), Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, Thomas Malory's *Le Mort d'Arthur* (1485), an edition of the jests of Nasreddin Hoca, the *Edda* by Snorri Sturluson, and a collection of slave narratives from Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, and Ohio (http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Main_Page). A fine collection of folktales can be found on D. L. Ashliman's site called *Folklore and Mythology: Electronic Texts* (<http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/folktexts.html>) and on David K. Brown's site *Folklore, Myth and Legend* (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/storfolk.html>). Of course, there are many Web pages dedicated to a single oeuvre, such as the one containing the works of Hans Christian Andersen (<http://hca.gilead.org.il>) and the one with a translation of the Latin *Facetiae* (1470) of Gian Francesco Poggio Bracciolini (<http://www.elfinspell.com/PoggioTitle.html>). The epic of *The Wedding of Mustajbey's Son Bećirbey*, as performed by the Bosnian singer Halil Bajgorić, can be experienced in an original transcript, with an English translation, introduction, and comments and with the authentic audio file (<http://www.oraltradition.org/zbm>).

Many Web sites around the world present the local legends of a region or town. These sites are built by private persons as a hobby and by local organizations to promote tourism. Modern genres such as urban legends and jokes are collected on the Internet as well. The most famous site on urban legends is the *Urban Legends References Pages*, also known as *Snopes* (<http://www.snopes.com>), which contains thousands of versions and for every story tries to determine whether it is true or false (or somewhere in between). Apart from this site, there are *Urbanlegends.com* (<http://urbanlegends.com>), David Emery's pages on *Urban Legends and Folklore* (<http://urbanlegends.about.com>), the site of *Scambusters* (<http://www.scambusters.org/legends.html>), and the *Urban Legends and Modern Myths* site (<http://www.warphead.com/modules/news>). *Vmyths* is a site that deals particularly with digital chain letters containing virus hoaxes (<http://www.vmyths.com>). There are so many private sites with collections of jokes and funny pictures that it is impossible to summarize them all. *Jokes Galore*

(<http://www.jokesgalore.com>) and *JokeCenter* (<http://www.jokecenter.com>) are just two examples.

All of these sites provide researchers with a great deal of textual material that can be read, downloaded, and, with the appropriate software, put into databases, indexed, or researched—for example, with respect to word frequencies. To perform comparative research, folklorists still have to do much work themselves. Furthermore, a lot of traditional material constitutes literature, not transcripts of oral transmission; and if sites do present oral material, contextual information is very often lacking. For instance, there is often no indication of when and where the story was told and by whom. Neither do such sites state to which tale type the story belongs according to international catalogues by Antti Aarne, Stith Thompson, and Hans-Jörg Uther. It seems that only small countries such as the Netherlands and Flanders (the northern half of Belgium) are building folktale databases that meet the more specific needs of folk-narrative researchers. Both the *Nederlandse Volksverhalenbank* (Dutch Folktale Database, <http://www.verhalenbank.nl>) and the *Vlaamse Volksverhalenbank* (Flemish Folktale Database, <http://www.volksverhalenbank.be>) allow scholars to search on keywords, names, genres, provinces, places, and dates. Many of the folktales stem from oral tradition, are catalogued according to the internationally acknowledged typology, and are contextualized with information about the narrator. These databases take digital archiving and retrievability a step further: they serve as advanced research instruments and can be consulted from all over the world. The single disadvantage is that the databases are available only in Dutch, not in English.

At the moment, folktales from Western cultures are most easily obtained from the Internet. For comparative research there is still a great need for English translations—for example, of traditional Asian folktales such as the Indian Jātakas (third century BCE) and the Japanese tales in the *Konjaku monogatari* (Tales of Times Now Past, early twelfth century). On the other hand, there is no decent edition of Johannes Pauli's *Schimpf und Ernst* (Ridiculous and Serious, 1522) to be found on the Web either.

In addition to these primary sources—that is, texts of folktales and fairy tales—on the Internet, there is also an abundance of Web sites with secondary information about subjects such as folklore and narrativity, mythology, and fairy tales and legends. Examples of these include the *Encyclopedia Mythica* (<http://www.pantheon.org>), *Myths and Legends* (<http://www.myths.com/pub/myths/myth.html>), D. L. Ashliman's *Folklinks: Folk and Fairy-Tale Sites* (<http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/folklinks.html>), and the site on *Irish Literature, Mythology, Folklore, and Drama* (<http://www.luminarium.org/mythology/ireland>).

Narrating on the Net

In the previous cases, the Internet functions more or less as a worldwide digital library. The Internet also can be used as a virtual place to tell stories. For instance,

personal narratives or memorates can be found on a variety of weblogs. Riddles, jokes, (urban) legends, and rumors are told on mailing lists and in news groups, discussion forums, and chat rooms. When legends are told by someone as being true stories, a discussion often follows with other members of the group on the reliability of the story. There are certain newsgroups specializing in narrative subjects, such as alt.jokes, alt.humor, alt.folklore.ghost-stories, and many more. Some specialized Web sites have their own forums, where narratives can be found on subjects like ethnicity, fantasy, the paranormal, hauntings, UFOs, crop circles, and the End of Days. Particularly in newsgroups, mailing lists, and discussion forums, folk narrative researchers can operate as invisible field-workers simply by “lurking” (reading but not participating in the discussion). One of the disadvantages of communication on the Internet, however, is that one can never be sure of the identity of the narrator. Most participants present themselves with a “handle” or nickname and create their own virtual identity through “avatars” (little pictures that are meant to represent some part of their personality) and mottos. One cannot even be sure whether a participant is male or female, or young or old. For this, one needs to follow live chat sessions in which webcams are used. Another way to study human interaction and storytelling was facilitated by the (originally Dutch) television program *Big Brother*, in which a group of people was voluntarily locked into a house and surrounded by cameras and microphones. All of their actions, pranks, jokes, and memorates could be followed online, twenty-four hours a day, thanks to live video streams on the Internet.

Probably the most popular form of virtual storytelling, especially among youngsters and office workers, is sending textual and visual jokes by e-mail. The oldest visual jokes consisted of ASCII-drawings (<http://www.asciiartfarts.com/20060423.html>). One of the advantages of virtual joking is that one no longer needs to be a gifted narrator. All that is necessary is the ability to cut and paste or just to forward a funny text. The computer will keep every binary byte in its place, while the sender can still gain prestige as an amusing person. One of the disadvantages is that many jokes no longer show variation, whereas in oral transmission, the narrator would improvise (after all, only a punch line needs to be memorized) and adapt the joke to his or her liking and to that of the audience. Still, there are digital jokes circulated that are altered, reworked, and enhanced—for instance, a funny list of differences between men and women.

The digital revolution made another form of visual joking possible: Photoshop lore. Photoshop is one of the most popular computer programs with which images are manipulated. Actually, Photoshop lore is in many ways the successor of the well-known XeroxCopy lore. In the past, people copied funny pictures and cartoons and distributed them on paper. The digital distribution of Photoshop lore and the oral transmission of traditional jokes have some features in common: (1) The original maker of the joke remains anonymous most of the time; (2) The

joke is transmitted from person to person(s); (3) The joke comments on subjects that—at least according to the narrator and audience—really matter in present-day society; (4) The Photoshop joke deals with the same taboos, frustrations, prejudices, and fantasies as the traditional oral joke; and (5) As in traditional joking, Photoshop jokes are recycled every once in a while—lying politicians, for instance, have repeatedly been depicted as Pinocchio with a long nose. The phenomenon of Photoshop lore has existed since the late 1990s, as soon as enough people were able to receive e-mails with attachments. Still, its popularity increased after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. E-mailboxes in the Western world immediately became inundated with Photoshop humor about the Twin Towers, George W. Bush, Osama bin Laden, Afghanistan, al-Qaida, and Muslim terrorism in general. Since then, Photoshop lore has been made on every subject worth joking about; there even exist Internet contests. The visualization of jokes has not stopped at pictures: they are disseminated as PowerPoint presentations, Macromedia animations, and QuickTime movies as well.

As far as narrating on the Internet is concerned, it appears that the telling of jokes, riddles, rumors, and (urban) legends is more popular than telling a traditional fairy tale. Every now and again, fairy tale parodies (see Parody) surface, both as texts and as pictures. Sexual relationships between fairy tale figures from Disney seem to be especially favored, for instance between Beauty and the Beast or Snow White and the seven dwarfs.

Another old form of folklore has infested the Internet: the chain letter. The e-mail must be forwarded to multiple persons to avoid (personal) harm and bring about happiness and good fortune. Sometimes it is necessary to forward the e-mail to raise money for a sick child who needs an operation. In other cases, Bill Gates will reward people with a large sum of money for testing his new e-mail tracking software. Of course, these are all hoaxes, as are the many alerts for computer viruses that never come. The first e-mail of this kind started circulating in 1994 as a warning against the (nonexistent) Good Times virus. Many of these virus alerts followed (Irina, Deeyenda, Join the crew, Penpal greetings, It Takes Guts to Say "Jesus," Your friend D@fit, etc.). Most of the time, it is said that opening the e-mail will cause a virus to forward itself to everyone in the address book and to erase all of their hard drives. Companies such as IBM, AOL, Microsoft, and McAfee are mentioned to make the message more believable. In some cases, the e-mail advises recipients to delete a certain file when present, after which the users soon find out they did not erase a virus but a part of the standard Windows software. As a reaction to the virus hoaxes, obvious parodies or anti-legends circulated, in which the virus was said to wipe out all of your credit cards, date your girlfriend, and drink all of your beer. Another story that dupes the unwary is the so-called Nigerian Scam. The reader is requested by a very

polite, well-educated, and mostly Christian official to help transfer millions of dollars out of the country by opening a trustworthy bank account. The reward will be tremendous, but the reader must first pay a certain amount of money for the associated costs of the transaction. It goes without saying that the victim will never see a penny in return.

A final example of narrating on the Net deals with the neglected genre of the “situation puzzle,” also known as the “albatross story” or “kwispel.” A “kwispel” is a narrative riddle game in which the narrator or riddler in a few words unveils the mysterious conclusion of a story and asks what happened, whereupon it is up to the audience to unravel the entire plot of the story by asking questions that can only be answered by “yes” or “no.” Here is a classic clue the riddler might give: “A man lies dead in his room. On the floor are sawdust and small pieces of wood. What happened?” The game is often played by adolescents, those on vacation, or friends around a campfire. Recently, the game has been played on the Internet by members of a Yahoo mailing list: the contestants were allowed to ask five questions in one e-mail. The solution of the previous riddle was: The dead man on the floor was a blind midget and worked in a circus. He was famous for being the shortest man on earth. A jealous competitor secretly sawed small pieces of wood from the blind midget’s cane, as well as from the legs of his chairs, his table, and so forth. This made the midget believe that he had started to grow and that, soon, he would no longer be the smallest midget on earth. Finally, in his despair, he committed suicide (and now the competitor is the smallest midget on earth). This is a good example of interactive storytelling in cyberspace.

Playing Tales

Finally, it is not only possible to tell or listen to a tale. Thanks to computer technology, one can also play and experience a tale—at least in virtual reality. Soon after consumers started buying personal computers, the first computer games were developed. Today, the game industry is making more money than the film industry. Many games—especially adventure games—take their themes, motifs, and structures from fairy tales, myths, and legends. This applies to early games such as the King’s Quest series, as well as to later productions such as the Final Fantasy series. Interactivity has been added since computers and game consoles can be plugged into the Internet. Now players can simultaneously play their own roles in folktale-like adventures thanks to the MMORPGs: the Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games, bearing names such as *Ultima Online*, *EverQuest*, and *World of Warcraft*.

For many people in the early days, the personal computer started out as just another electronic typewriter. The machine with its monochrome screen was mainly used for storing data and texts. Soon it changed from an electronic book into a sort of television due to the addition of audiovisual features: color, icons,

illustrations, animations, speech, sound, and so on. Intertextuality was enhanced through hyperlinks, and the computer turned into a multimedia device with unprecedented possibilities, while the Internet greatly expanded the means of storing, retrieving, and exchanging data—including folktales. The Internet did not destroy oral communication or social contact, as pessimists would have it; the Internet just added more and new ways to contact and communicate with people we would probably never otherwise meet. Considering the fact that computer technology and the Internet will become even more audiovisual, we will probably soon use the Internet to tell real-time oral stories to each other once again. In the future, game-like storytelling may even turn into a “holodeck” experience, in which the tale is lived in 3-D virtual reality. Meanwhile, folktale databases will be filled not only with textual transcripts and photographs but also with movie samples showing storytellers’ performances.

Theo Meder

See Also Cyberculture; Vernacular.

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Invented Tradition

A term proposed by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger to describe recently developed symbolic social practices that serve to establish continuity with “suitable pasts.” During rapid social change, they argued, “instant formulations of new traditions” (such as national anthems, costumes, and ceremonials) provide comforting links to imagined ancient stability while lending “historical” validation to sponsoring elites. The notion of tradition as fluidly constructed rather than rigidly transmitted has profoundly affected thinking about historical processes, including nationalism, ethnogenesis, and folk behavior.

Among students of folklore, of course, the “invariant” past had sparked antiquarian longing since the eighteenth century, and salvaging popular traditions became the discipline’s *raison d’être*. That situation did not change substantially until 1972, when the influential anthology *Toward New Perspectives in Folklore* stressed the contextual variability of traditional material and explicitly denied the stability of “handed-down” texts. Although its contributors did not invoke invented tradition *per se*, the anthology radically reshaped folklorists’ affection for the “authentic” and thus prefigured the Hobsbawm-Ranger thesis.

In the folklore literature proper, fruitful applications of that thesis have been made by Richard Handler, Jocelyn Linnekin, and Regina Bendix. In a paper revising Edward Sapir’s famous distinction between genuine and spurious culture, Handler and Linnekin contended that tradition is “inevitably invented because it enters into the construction of social identity” as mediated by both personal and nationalist concerns. From fieldwork among Québécois and Hawaiian “folklore popularizers,” they redefined tradition as “a model of the past . . . inseparable from the interpretation of tradition in the present.” In her analysis of Swiss *folklorismus*, Bendix argued that, in the modern world of intercultural contact, tradition invention is the norm rather than the exception and a worthy, however staged, form of expression. Newly traditionalized “display events,” she wrote, can be liberating affirmations of local culture.

Bendix’s paper also usefully addressed the burgeoning literature on tourism, one important area in which the invented tradition model—working in tandem,

as it were, with Benedict Anderson's equally popular "imagined communities" model—has fueled a reappraisal of ethnic nationalism. The nation-state, in fact, takes center stage in many recent studies of tradition invention. Hobsbawm and Ranger themselves set the tone by focusing on the inventions of British colonialism. Michael Bommès and Patrick Wright, anticipating Hobsbawm and Ranger's *The Invention of Tradition* by a year, deconstructed the British countryside as the faux nostalgia of a corporate "heritage" industry, and Dave Harker similarly debunked traditional music, skewering the support of "fake-song" as a statist plot. A less doctrinaire, but no less scathing, exposé of nationalized tradition was Ana Maria Alonso's deft dissection of Mexican "state cannibalism."

Studies of the manipulated past are not, however, invariably grim. Alonso, Handler, Linnekin, and Bendix were all alert to the negotiation involved in tradition invention—to the creative innovations of common people, often against the hegemonizing of elites. This was true as well in Hanson's work on Maori identity and of the essays contained in two provocative anthologies. In Jay O'Brien and William Roseberry's volume on imagining the past, "A Variety of Modern Tracks toward the Traditional" revealed the constancy of exchange between hegemonic and subaltern. In Gregory Urban and Joel Sherzer's work on Latin America, contributors highlighted the resilience of native peoples in expressing indigenous music, dress, and language. Thus, the *folklorization* of the powerless, a statist project, may itself be the subject of popular reinvention.

Tad Tuleja

See Also Authenticity; Fakelore; Folklorismus/Folklorism; Tradition.

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Jack and the Beanstalk

“Jack and the Beanstalk” is one of the most widespread and most studied of all folktales. In its basic version, the story is that of a boy called Jack who lives on a farm with his widowed mother. They are poor and often have no food. Their only possession is their cow, which, of course, provides them with milk, butter, and cheese. One day, Jack’s mother tells him that their circumstances are so desperate that they must sell the much-loved and valuable cow. Unhappily, Jack agrees to take the cow to market for sale. Along the way, he meets a strange, wizened little man who asks him where he is going. On hearing that Jack is off to market to sell the cow, the little man offers to buy it from Jack for three magic beans. Jack, somewhat spellbound by the man, agrees and returns home with the beans in great excitement.

When he tells his mother what he has done and shows her three beans, she is furious, pointing out in no uncertain terms that Jack has been well and truly taken in by this strange man and has given away their only hope of survival for three worthless beans. In her rage, she throws the beans out the window and into the garden.



Poster depicting Jack climbing the beanstalk and the giant waiting for him, by Aida McKenzie for the Works Progress Administration Art Project, ca. 1936–1941. (Library of Congress)

Miserable and hungry, Jack goes upstairs to bed, berating himself for his foolishness. He goes to sleep and wakes at dawn the next day to see through his bedroom window that an enormous beanstalk has sprouted from the discarded beans. The beanstalk is so thick that it is like a tree and so high that it disappears into the clouds.

Full of youthful curiosity, and against his mother's orders, Jack climbs the beanstalk, going up through the clouds and arriving in a strange land ruled over by an ogre and his wife. Jack befriends the ogre's wife, and she hides him when the ogre returns to their castle, hungry as usual, for some small boy to eat and chanting some variant of the famous:

Fee, fie, fo, fum,
I smell the blood of an Englishman.
Be he alive or be he dead,
I'll grind his bones to make my bread.

With the help of the ogre's wife, Jack discovers that the ogre has some useful treasures stored in his castle, including a magic singing harp and a goose that lays golden eggs. Jack resolves to steal these items in order to improve his and his mother's lot.

After a greater or shorter number of adventures and close calls with the ogre, depending on the length of story required by teller and audience, Jack finally escapes down the beanstalk with the golden-egg-laying goose, hotly pursued by an angry ogre. Fortunately, young Jack is fit, which, together with his fright, helps him move quickly. He makes it to the bottom of the beanstalk and into his house as the ogre is still descending through the clouds. Grabbing an axe, Jack rushes out to the garden and desperately chops away at the beanstalk as the ogre gets nearer and nearer. In the nick of time, the beanstalk is felled and the ogre crashes to earth and dies. Jack and his mother now have the golden goose and become enormously wealthy. Jack usually marries a beautiful princess, and they live happily ever after.

Versions of the tale are told throughout the English-speaking world and Europe, and it is also known in Asian tradition. There have been many attempts to explain the popularity and significance of this story and its hero since it first became widely popular in the early eighteenth century. Interpretations include the wilder shores of Freudian analysis represented by Desmond, in which the beanstalk is treated as a phallic symbol; the therapeutic approach of Bettelheim; the comparison of national stereotypes by Wolfenstein; and the attempt to trace the story to an actual tropical plant by Humphreys. As well, there is a considerable literature about "Jack and the Beanstalk" in the fields of folklore and fairy tale studies.

Graham Seal

See Also Fairy Tale Heroes.

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Japanese Folklore

Periods of Cultural History

Recorded Japanese cultural history, for the sake of simplicity, can be divided into four periods: (1) fifth to twelfth century, when the imperial family and noble families rule and are the creators and purveyors of artistic taste; (2) late twelfth to mid-seventeenth century, when warrior clans rule and determine artistic taste and culture; (3) mid-seventeenth to mid-nineteenth century, when warriors rule but now the rising merchant class becomes the leader in the creation and consumption of art and culture; and (4) late nineteenth century to the present with the development of mass culture.

The earliest written records in Japan are the *Kojiki* (712 CE), the *Nihon shoki* (720 CE), and approximately sixty *fudoki* from the eighth century CE. The *Kojiki* (Records of Ancient Matters) includes myths of the creation of heaven, earth, and Japan and of the descent of the gods to Japan. It provides an explanation of the relationship between certain gods and the imperial family and other powerful clans and presents legendary and historical data covering the first emperor, Jimmu, to the fifth century emperor Ojin. Concerned that the oral reciters of this material were forgetting or corrupting the stories of the foundation of Japan and the connection between the imperial family and the gods, the emperor ordered the compilation of the *Kojiki* in the late seventh century. A written record would fix the history and pedigree for all times.

The *Nihon shoki* (Chronicle of Japan) is a history of Japan from the mythical age of the gods to the empress Jito, who ruled in the late seventh century. While it covers much of the same time period as the *Kojiki*, the *Nihon shoki* focuses much more on the day-to-day activities of the emperors and empresses. This early history is also of interest because it provides multiple versions of many of the myths, legends, and stories.

Approximately sixty *fudoki* were compiled in the eighth century by order of the emperor. Each of the *fudoki* focused on a specific geographical area and reported on the local topography, etymologies of place names, natural resources, local legends, folktales, deities, and folk beliefs. Of the sixty original *fudoki*, only five have survived in a form close to the originals.

Most of the records that have come down to us from the Nara (710–784 CE) and Heian (794–1185 CE) periods derive from aristocratic life. Some of these materials provide information about local legends and folktales and often contain a wealth of information about the folk belief system. An excellent example is *The Tale of Genji*, written in the eleventh century by Murasaki Shikibu (978–ca. 1016), a lady-in-waiting to the empress. *The Tale of Genji*, which is often cited as the first great novel in world literature, contains a number of episodes of spirit possession, still a commonly held belief in Japan. The two most famous episodes of possession relate to the death of Genji's young lover Yugao and then eventually the death of his pregnant wife Aoi. Both occur at the hands of the possessing spirit of an earlier jilted lover. Recently, Doris Barge (1997) has done a detailed study of these possession episodes, comparing and contrasting male-centered and female-centered interpretations of these spirits.

The Heian and Kamakura (1185–1333 CE) periods mark a high point in the collection and publication of Buddhist and secular tales including almost fifty different titles. The *Nihon ryoiki*, which contains 116 Buddhist tales and legends, was compiled in the 820s. Many other collections of Buddhist tales exist—two of the most important being the *Dainihonkoku Hokekyokenki*, which was compiled in the mid-eleventh century and contains 129 tales, and Muju Ichien's *Shasekishu*, which was compiled in the late thirteenth century. A number of collections contain mixtures of Buddhist and secular tales. The two most important are the *Konjaku monogatari*, which was compiled in the early twelfth century and is one of the great tale collections in the world, containing 1,039 tales, and the early thirteenth-century *Uji shui monogatari*, which contains 197 tales. These tale collections were compiled for a number of reasons, but the two most important are for the compiler to gain merit for his next rebirth and for use by itinerant priests who traveled the countryside to spread Buddhist teachings and collect donations for the construction of temples and statues.

The recitation and eventual transcription of the great Japanese war epic *The Tale of the Heike* occurred during the Kamakura and Ashikaga (1338–1573)

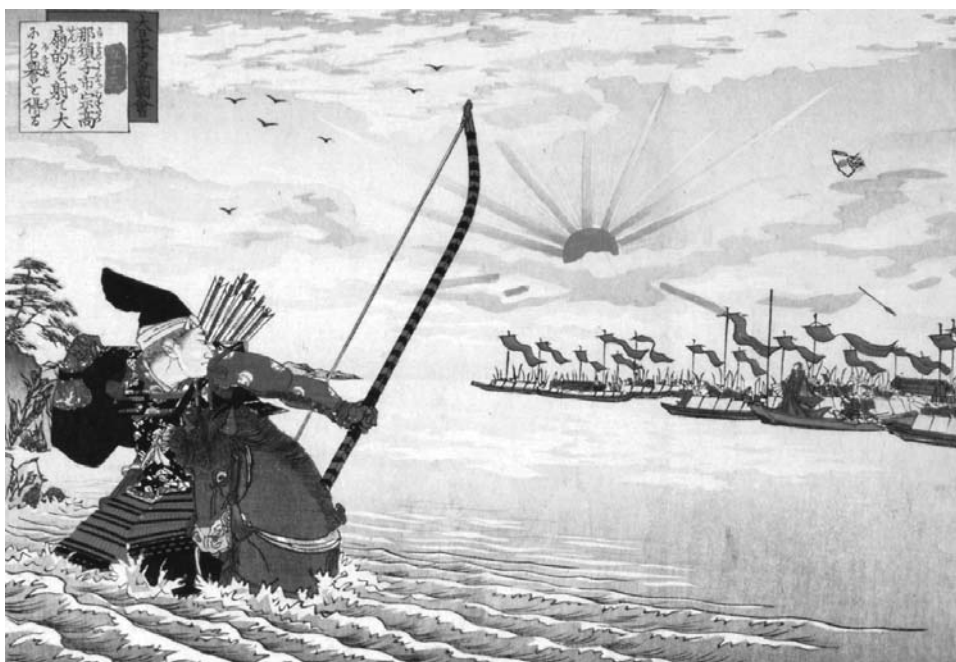


Illustration from an 1885 edition of *The Tale of the Heike* depicting the Japanese warrior Nasu no Yoichi seated on a horse and looking back at enemy vessels offshore. (Library of Congress)

periods. This collection of martial exploits and legends is based on the great civil war between the Heike and Genji clans, which took place from 1180 to 1185, and is one of the most powerful examples in Japanese literature of the Buddhist concept of *mujo* (impermanence/change). A tradition arose of mostly blind itinerant jongleurs (*biwa hoshi*) who traveled the countryside singing and reciting famous episodes from this war. Eventually, a longer version of the tale recited by the great *biwa hoshi* Kakuichi was recorded in 1371 and quickly became the standard text for reading and recitation. Many of the individual stories and legends have been used by dramatists to write plays of great pathos. Some of the most moving examples are the warrior ghost plays in the Noh theater, which not only relate famous tales but also illustrate Buddhist ideas and ideals of death and the afterlife as well as belief in spirits of the dead and their ability to interact with the living.

During the Edo (1600–1868) period a group of scholars began to study Japanese classical literature and ancient writings in a search for the true Japanese spirit (*Yamato gokoro*). The scholars of note in this investigation of Japanese thought and culture, called *kokugaku* (National learning), were Kada no Azumamaro (1669–1736), Kamo no Mabuchi (1697–1769), Motoori Norinaga (1730–1801), and Hirata Atsutane (1776–1843). By means of philological studies of the classics, including the *Manyoshu* (an eighth-century poetry collection), the

Kojiki, the *Nihon shoki*, and *The Tale of Genji*, these scholars attempted to identify the roots of Japanese culture before the introduction of Chinese influence in the sixth to ninth centuries. While their focus varied, an underlying ideological foundation came to support a very nationalistic view of Japan and Japanese history in the nineteenth century. The influence of *kokugaku* thought on the eventual overthrow of the Tokugawa family and military rule in Japan in 1868 and the “restoration” of the emperor to his rightful place as ruler of Japan cannot be underestimated. An underlying problem that they faced, and one that has interesting parallels elsewhere in the world (e.g., the Grimm brothers in Germany and Lönnrot in Finland), was the fact that all of the classical documents studied from earlier times were written in a script borrowed from China. How could the true Japanese spirit be expressed and discovered in a foreign language?

Religious Beliefs

Buddhism and Confucianism were introduced to Japan from China in the sixth century. Both had a profound effect on Japanese culture. Buddhism introduced elite Japanese to higher Chinese culture. A close connection between Buddhism and the state also developed over time with imperial support of priests and temples. A system of *kokubunji* (country protecting temples) was constructed in the eighth century by order of the emperor. Strong ties between families and clans also developed initially with aristocratic families building their own temples and later (from the seventeenth century) with most families establishing family gravesites at a particular temple. Another area of interest was the esoteric side of Buddhism, which along with the shamanistic elements already in Japan, is still popular today. These practices connect practitioners to the world of spirits, ancestors, and *genze riyaku* (this world benefits).

Finally, Confucianism has had tremendous impact on Japanese society. The dissemination of this Chinese import has been promoted by most Japanese governments and elite society because it makes a very strong argument for a hierarchical society in which everyone must understand his or her place. When people understand their places, live according to their stations in life, interact with those above with deference and with those below with kindness and forbearance, then all will be well in Heaven, in nature, and among humans. If strictly practiced, Confucianism argues against social change and for the status quo.

The fifth through the eighth centuries CE saw a tremendous Chinese influence on Japanese culture. Prior to this time the Japanese did not have a written script and therefore borrowed the Chinese writing system. The Japanese also borrowed and modified Chinese historical writing, legal codes, layout of the capital city, Buddhism (with all of its attendant art, literature, and architecture), Confucianism, Daoism, painting, and poetry among other aspects of culture. The influence is of such major proportions that a movement that lasted from the seventeenth to

the nineteenth centuries aimed to eliminate Chinese cultural influence and discover the true Japanese spirit (*Yamato gokoro*).

Folk Religion and Performing Arts

Another area of intense interest is *minkan shinko* (folk religion, folk belief). The formal study of *minkan shinko* can be traced back to the Edo period and the early *kokugaku* scholars. In their attempts to discover the original Japanese spirit, they focused on indigenous belief systems and practices. Along with the indigenous beliefs there were many accretions from foreign belief systems, most notably Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism. The study of *minkan shinko* has focused on a number of areas: *kami* (gods) and spirits, divine chastisement and protection, worship and taboos, annual observances (Miyake [1972] lists fifteen), rites of passage (Miyake lists six), superstitions, connections to social organization, and the relation to new religious movements that have arisen since the early nineteenth century.

Minzoku geino (folk performing arts) have also been studied extensively. Many such performances have their basis in the distant past and can be studied historically, especially their close connections to the agricultural cycle (most notably rice planting and harvesting) and the local festival and religious context. Honda Yasuji established a classification system for *minzoku geino* that includes three major categories: *kagura* (dramatic singing and dancing performances usually performed at Shinto shrines for the protection of human life), *dengaku* (performances focusing on the production of rice and guaranteeing enough of this staple grain to sustain human life), and *furyu* (a performance in which harmful spirits are banished, thereby driving away evil influences that threaten human life). All three categories center on protecting and sustaining the lives of human beings and demonstrate the close connection that exists between *kami* and humans and the avenues of communication that are open between them through the performing arts. The study of festival, which combines elements of *minkan shinko* and *minzoku geino*, has also been a rich field of study in Japanese folklore with numerous field reports from throughout the country being written.

Sports and Games

Before the war, sports and games were studied as part of the larger research on rural village life encouraged by Yanagita. After the war, the study of games and sports received modest attention. Earlier studies were searched for references to children's games, which were then examined for the light they might shed on such practices, especially on lost traditions. One of the most interesting reports dating from the 1930s was from the diary kept by Ella Embree while her husband John Embree was conducting anthropological research in a small Japanese village. From her diary we learn of the places where games were played, the kinds of games, the

gendered nature of certain games, and the importance in many of the games of imitating adult behaviors. Many scholars have lamented that because of the *juku* (cram school) system of education now in place children do not have time to interact and play with their peers. The play that they do participate in is often limited to computer games. Sports, especially baseball, sumo, and the martial arts, have received more attention. Robert Whiting has written about the history and peculiarly Japanese way of playing baseball, which is arguably the national sport. He has clearly shown that cultural factors are very important in sport and can alter the way a game is played in important ways. Sumo and the other martial arts, which are often considered quintessentially Japanese, have also been widely studied. Some of the recent scholarship, taking their cue from Benedict Anderson, looks at these sports and their histories as forms of invented tradition.

Arts, Crafts, and Architecture

Folk architecture, most notably *minka* (farm houses) and *kura* (storehouses), has been widely studied. The basic areas of interest are the materials used in construction, floor plans, basic structural features (e.g., foundation, floor, posts and framework, beam systems, and roof trusses), and regional styles—especially of the roofs.

Finally, the subject of *mingei* (folk crafts), initially under the direction of Yanagi Muneyoshi, was widely studied and promoted. An incredible amount of research related to pottery, textiles, woodworking, shop signs, and numerous other crafts has been published. Numerous small specialty retail stores sell *mingei* throughout Japan and most large department stores have a *mingei* section. One of the best specialty stores is Bingoya, which is located in Tokyo and stocks a large selection of *mingei* from all over Japan.

Challenges of the Modern World

After the devastation of World War II, Japan began its recovery in the late 1940s through the 1950s. The beginning of the so-called economic miracle in the 1960s also marked an increase in disposable income and leisure time, and a “cultural boom.” In the 1970s, a “nostalgia boom” occurred when Japan experienced an increased interest in the arts (both folk and elite); constructed history and folklore museums and clubs throughout the country; and strengthened existing and created new departments of folklore study at the university level, which trained advanced graduate students who went on to teach at universities and work in museums. The National Museum of History was opened in Sakura in 1983, just outside of Tokyo. This museum is the first national museum of history and has four research sections: history, folklore, archeology, and museum science. Every major town and city in Japan has its own history and folklore museum. These museums have very active exhibition schedules, publish a plethora of material

on the history and folklore of the area, and outreach programs aimed at students and local residents.

Along with the increased interest in the academic study of folklore, a concomitant interest in creating or recreating local festivals grew as part of the nostalgia boom. Villages, towns, and cities vied with each other in marketing their “traditional” crafts and festivals as tourist attractions. The Japanese National Railway (JNR) recognized this trend early in its development and began to take an active interest in the promotion of such activities in an attempt to increase their revenues through increased travel. JNR began national advertising campaigns (created by Dentsu, the largest advertising agency in the world), which were aimed at encouraging people to travel from large metropolitan areas back to the countryside to discover and participate in “traditional Japan” firsthand. This was seen as a way to reconnect with the true Japanese spirit, which seemed to have gone awry during the brutality of the war and the focus on materialistic aspects of life during the subsequent recovery. This phenomenon led to further academic study of tradition and the invention of tradition.

Modern Studies of Japanese Folklore

Some scholars see the founding of modern folklore studies (*minzokugaku*) in Japan in the early twentieth century as an attempt to continue *kokugaku* studies. The three founders of modern folklore studies in Japan were Yanagita Kunio (1875–1962), Yanagi Muneyoshi (Soetsu; 1889–1961), and Orikuchi Shinobu (1887–1953). Yanagita was initially a government bureaucrat and then a journalist who traveled extensively around Japan. He eventually became interested in the folk, their way of life, stories, and the notion that the uneducated masses, who had not been influenced by Chinese cultural importations as much as the elites, expressed in their daily life the true Japanese spirit. His first collection of tales, entitled *Tono monogatari* (1910), demonstrated clearly that ordinary farmers were not concerned with national events and the emperor, but rather told stories about ghosts and spirits and the potential dangers of country life. From around 1930, Yanagita worked full time trying to lay a foundation for folklore studies. He encouraged fieldwork studies of rural areas, focusing on folk religion, oral narratives, local festivals, and social organization. In 1934, Yanagita published his *Folklore Handbook* as a guide for young field-workers, who were instructed how to go into rural farming and fishing villages to collect the 100 items of data listed in the *Handbook*. At this time (1957), he also wrote a history of the Meiji period (1868–1912) in which he did not use one proper name, in order to make the point that history could be written from the perspective of the nameless masses. Yanagita’s major writings were collected in thirty-six volumes in 1985.

Yanagita’s relative lack of interest in folk material culture was addressed by Yanagi Muneyoshi, the driving force in the folk craft (*mingei*) movement, which

began to take shape in the 1920s. Yanagi was not only a collector but also a sponsor and mentor of traditional crafts and craftsmen. The artists most prominently associated with Yanagi's attempts to revive folk crafts were the potters Hamada Shoji, Kawai Kanjiro, and the English potter Bernard Leach, the woodblock print artist Munakata Shiko, and the textile designer and dyer Serizawa Keisuke. In the early 1930s, Yanagi began publishing a journal focusing on the decorative arts, and in 1936 he established the Japan Folk Crafts Museum to preserve and display traditional folk crafts. A visit to this museum, located in Komaba in Tokyo, illustrates his principal areas of interest: textiles; ceramics; objects made of wood, lacquer, and metal; and pictorial art. In his writings, Yanagi attempted to explain the appeal of everyday objects made by the hands of skilled craftsmen. The appeal was not only esthetic but also religious in nature and, if made properly and approached properly, could enrich one's life in innumerable ways. Yanagi's major writings are collected in ten volumes.

The third great figure in the early development of folklore studies in Japan was Orikuchi Shinobu. Orikuchi, a scholar of classical Japanese literature and a poet, focused his folklore studies on literary-philological approaches; that is, in many ways he was continuing in the *kokugaku* tradition. Orikuchi's approach has often been said to be the opposite of Yanagita's because Orikuchi studied ancient sources first and then searched for modern remnants, while Yanagita began with the present tradition and then tried to relate it to the past. His major works are collected in eighteen volumes.

During the Pacific War (1937–1945), it was difficult for most scholars to undertake serious research. The government encouraged folklorists to continue their work, however, because it was seen as an investigation of the Japanese spirit, which the government was interested in promoting for the war effort. Some folklorists were also sent overseas, especially to Korea and China, to conduct fieldwork among the subjected peoples. During this period of military expansionist policies in Asia, folklore—in particular folk narrative—was put to use by the government to further its policies. One of the most prominent examples is the use of the famous folktale of Momotaro (Peach Boy), who is born into humble origins, grows up to be a paragon of virtue and filial piety, and with some animal helpers encounters and defeats some ogres and devils who are plaguing the virtuous peasants. Making the connection between Momotaro and the Japanese, who were attempting to free enslaved Asians from the American and European imperialist powers, and between the ogres and devils and the imperialist West, was easy.

The thought of Yanagita, Yanagi, and Orikuchi dominated Japanese folklore studies through the 1960s and beyond. One of the major problems for later scholars was distancing themselves from these founders without appearing to disrespect their life's work. The collection and analysis of folklore materials in the twentieth century focused on a number of areas. One main area of interest was oral

narratives—especially the folktale. In 1936, Yanagita published a handbook with 100 representative folktales for collectors, including blank pages for them to record similar tales from informants. This handbook was mailed to collectors throughout Japan, who were asked to fill in the books with tales and return them to Yanagita for study. The books were so popular with the collectors that not one was returned. Many tales, however, were collected, and numerous journals began to publish them, thereby encouraging others to begin collecting. In 1958, one of Yanagita's assistants, Seki Keigo, published a collection of over 8,600 tales that he divided into 700 types. He established his own classification, making it difficult to use his work for comparative purposes with the type index of Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson. In 1971, Ikeda Hiroko published *A Type and Motif Index of Japanese Folk Literature* modeled on the Aarne-Thompson type and motif classification system. In addition to the tales themselves, the use of themes from oral narratives in the graphic arts is widespread. A classic of folklore study in Japan was the publication in 1908 of Henri L. Joly's *Legend in Japanese Art*. This text is a treasure trove of legendary tales with examples of their use and appearance in an incredibly wide variety of Japanese art forms. Many Japanese legends deal with the supernatural, which has also been a popular theme in various Japanese arts. The 1980s saw a boom in peasant studies in Japan. One area of particular interest was the study of peasant histories, including themes of peasant protest, early modern economic history and the plight of the peasants, martyrdom, and the narratives that developed around these heroes who sacrificed their lives for the masses. Research has also been conducted on the use of personal experience narratives (*taiken*) in new religions in Japan. Adherents are encouraged by the religious organizations to relate *taiken* in front of large groups of people, telling them of the benefits they have received by joining the group and internalizing and practicing their way of living. These narratives are often recorded and published in monthly newspapers and magazines and are considered to be one of the best recruitment tools for gaining new members.

Another popular area of study was folksong (*min'yo*). Before the age of television and mass communication, there were very clear regional differences (dialects, scale structures) in *min'yo*, which became less pronounced in the late twentieth century. The classification of the songs by function usually includes four specific headings: (1) religious songs used in Shinto rites and local festivals; (2) occupational songs used especially during the planting and harvesting of rice and for other agriculture-related activities; (3) songs for specific social gatherings, especially rites of passage; and (4) children's songs including both songs sung to and by children. Large collections of *min'yo* exist, and many of the field recordings have been released on records and compact discs.

Richard W. Anderson

See Also Chinese Folklore; Ethnic Folklore.

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Jewelry

A multidimensional traditional creation, requiring consideration in terms of its aesthetics, its social connections, historical resonances, and religious significance. Like all forms of material culture, jewelry can be analyzed within the master contexts of creation, consumption, and communication.

There are two distinct phases in the creation of jewelry. Ornaments are crafted by a series of makers—smiths, stone cutters and setters, engravers, and enamelers—who work together or alone. Like other traditional crafts, jewelry involves teaching and learning, usually in an atelier system with masters, journeymen, and apprentices. In the first phase of creation, raw materials are processed into

culturally significant objects. Then jewelry enters its second cycle of creation, in which men and women use the item in producing an assemblage, a personally meaningful ensemble of clothing and ornaments that is worn on various social occasions. Makers and wearers express themselves and their cultures through the vehicle of jewelry. All reveal personal aesthetic standards and shared cultural values as they seek approval. The maker wants to sell the piece; the wearer wishes to be admired.

Jewelry is beautiful to make and wear, and it has vital social functions. One is the amassing and displaying of wealth to achieve status. Buried jewelry discovered archaeologically signals the dead of high rank, as in the gold of Pre-Columbian America and the valuable stones of ancient Egypt. European paintings portray monarchs in precious ornaments. Many items of jewelry are owned but never worn; they are stockpiled, kept for a moment of distress and financial need, or passed on as heirlooms, connecting generations and families.

In many parts of the world, jewelry, as part of the dowry, functions to secure a daughter's marriage through the gift of wealth, and to secure the daughter's social position in her new home. In India, the dowry customarily consists of presents for the new household, such as furniture or appliances, but it also includes jewelry for the bride, the best pieces to be worn during the marriage ceremony. This jewelry is kept for the duration of the woman's life, and it may be recycled to provide a dowry for her daughter. In this case, items of adornment are usually melted down; the daughter receives new, currently fashionable pieces made from the mother's old-fashioned ornaments. Jewelry has the symbolic function of unifying two families and two individuals in marriage, and it functions to communicate wealth, providing a source of economic security, showcasing the generosity and good taste of the giver, the good fortune of the recipient.

Due to its durability, sturdy construction, and permanent materials, jewelry is one item of material culture—and of personal adornment—that lasts through the decades and centuries, and contemporary jewelry often makes reference to its historical context. For example, Varanasi (Banaras), in northeastern India, an important Hindu pilgrimage site, boasts thousands of craftsmen who shape ornaments in gold and precious stones. Most of these jewelers are Hindu men, yet their work celebrates the splendors of the Muslim Mughal past. Old items on display at museums and new ones made today exhibit the *kundan* setting—gemstones placed on a backing of beaten gold or silver and enveloped with incised ribbons of pure gold. On the back of these sumptuous ornaments one finds the pink enameling—*gulabi mina*—for which the city is famous. Both of these techniques speak of the importance of Banaras today as a nexus for the maintenance of traditional crafts, and both preserve the Muslim aesthetic in the production of items of personal adornment.

Another example is Navajo silver in the southwestern United States. The Navajo learned the craft of silversmithing in the mid-nineteenth century from Mexican



American Indian squash blossom necklace. (Warren Price/Dreamstime.com)

smiths who worked in a Spanish style. Later in that century, they developed a way of making beads from silver coins. The skills combine in the famous squash blossom necklace with its crescent pendant, the *naja*, a protective symbol used by the Muslims in Spain. A squash blossom necklace, handmade today and sold at Indian markets throughout the country, celebrates its historical and cultural influences, and the mastery and innovation in the art of the Navajo people.

The protective function of jewelry is central to its symbolic power. Items of jewelry, whether crafted of metal, stone, or beads, often served as amulets. In the Middle East, blue beads adorn all who need protection—babies, women and men, as well as horses, sheep, and houses. Beads in specific colors and combinations provide the wearer with the protection of the *orisas* in Africa, and in Cuba, Haiti, and Brazil.

In many cultures, items of jewelry represent the sacrament of marriage—condoned by religion and imbued with supernatural blessings. In the United States, it is the wedding band; in India, bangles or the *manglasutra* necklace serve to mark a woman as married. In Scandinavian folk dress, the silver brooch, worn by the bride, protected her from supernatural beings and fairies. This brooch traditionally carries the motif of a heart and a crown, representing love crowned by the sacrament. The crown and heart motif, found on brooches in Scandinavia and Scotland, is flanked by hands on the *claddagh* ring worn by Irish and Irish American men and women as a symbol of national pride and historical and geographic connection. This popular ring, like many items of jewelry, is simultaneously beautiful, socially meaningful, historically charged, and symbolically evocative.

Pravina Shukla

See Also Art, Folk; Material Culture.

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Jewish Folktales

An exceptional feature of the Jewish folktale is that part of the corpus has been preserved in writing since the biblical era. Although these stories—found in the Bible, Apocrypha, rabbinic literature, and medieval texts—have been edited, they are readily identifiable as folktales for a number of reasons: there are frequently multiple versions of the same story; they employ the typical poetics of folk literature; and they belong to folk literary genres.

Ethnographic transcription of Jewish folktales for documentary and scholarly purposes did not begin until the nineteenth century, under the influence of ideological currents in Europe such as Romanticism and nationalism. The fact that these tales have been preserved in writing for so many generations enables in-depth historical research of the Jewish folktale.

The Folktale in the Bible

The Bible encompasses years of cultural creation. Its stories are full of folk motifs. Some of them can be identified as folktales that circulated orally, as indicated by the existence of alternate versions of the same story. The most conspicuous examples of this are the two accounts of the creation of woman (Gen. 1.27 and Gen. 2.21–22); the story of Sarai in Pharaoh's house (Gen. 12.6–20), which is recapitulated when she is abducted by Abimelech, king of Gerar (Genesis 20); and the three versions of Saul's elevation to the kingship (1 Sam. 9.1–10.16; 1 Sam. 10.17–27; and 1 Sam. 11).

Some biblical narratives can also be found in the traditions of the ancient Near East and had international circulation, notably the story of the flood (Gen. 6.9–8.14). The story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39) is a well-known type about the seduction of a young man by an older woman. The duel between David and Goliath is a version of the prevalent *Märchen* or wonder tale in which it is always the youngest brother who kills the monster and marries the princess (1 Sam. 17–18). Stories of rainmaking and miraculous cures are found in the Elijah and Elisha cycles (1 Kings 17–19; 2 Kings 2.19–22, 4–5).



The queen sprinkling the water of life on Chaninah from "The Wicked King and His Bride," illustrated by Beatrice Hirschfeld. (Friedlander, Gerald, ed. *Jewish Fairy Stories*, 1917)

The most prominent genre in the Bible is the myth (the creation stories); however, we also encounter foundation stories, naming stories, and legends, such as those of the patriarchs in Genesis and of the prophets in the Book of Kings. There are legendary elements in the book of Jonah and the book of Job. The parable is represented by that of Jotham (Judg. 9.6–20), the story of the poor man's ewe lamb (2 Sam. 12.1–4), and Jehoshaphat of Israel's story of the thistle and the cedar (2 Kings 14.8–11; 2 Chron. 25.17–19). There are also novellas, including the judgment of Solomon (1 Kings 3.16–27), the Joseph story, and the book of Esther.

The Folktale in the Apocrypha

The Second Temple period covers approximately 500 years of Jewish history, including decisive events such as the return to Zion, the cultural penetration by Hellenism, the Hasmonean revolt, the birth of Christianity, and the establishment of large Jewish centers in Babylonia and Egypt. Many folktales of this period have come down to us in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, in books that were not admitted to the canon of the Hebrew Bible. Most of this fragmentary material has reached us second and third hand. Many of these books profess to be by or about characters and events known from the Bible. In this respect, there is continuity from the folktales of the biblical period, expressed also in the topics

treated, in the materials used, and in the literary genres. Here we can mention stories that expand on biblical accounts and praise-tale cycles (for example, the stories of Daniel). Some of the stories, however, do not have biblical antecedents, although they later became patterns of Jewish folk literature. These include the narratives of coping with life in the Diaspora, which tell of the deliverance of a Jewish community and the doom of those who sought to destroy it. This pattern can be traced back to the book of Esther, but here it is significantly expanded. There are also two stories whose heroines became the archetypes for women in times of persecution: the story of the mother and her seven sons, recounted in two versions in the Books of Maccabees (2 Macc. 7 and 4 Macc. 8–15), whose heroine became the archetype of the mother who dies a martyr's death; and Judith, who became the model for female bravery in times of persecution.

The Folktale in Rabbinic Literature

“Rabbinic literature” designates the corpus of texts redacted in the first centuries of the Common Era, which contain traditions that had been transmitted orally and in writing by groups of scholars or sages. This corpus has two main branches—*halakhah* (law) and *aggadah* (lore). These works can be classified by how they relate to the biblical text. They may be divided by their method of arrangement, whether topically, or as a sort of commentary or gloss on the biblical text. Those produced by the *tannaim* (late Second Temple period until ca. 220 CE) are found in the Mishnah, Tosefta, and halakhic midrashim (a collection of expositions on biblical verses, usually arranged in the order of verses of a biblical book; the earliest midrashim are halakhic midrashim). The subsequent period of the *amoraim* (third to fifth centuries) began with the death of Rabbi Judah of the Patriarch. Their traditions, organized as commentaries and expansions on the Mishnah, are recorded in the two Talmuds (the Jerusalem Talmud and the Babylonian Talmud). Not long after the final redaction of the Jerusalem Talmud (late fourth century), several series of homiletic or aggadic midrashim (redacted almost all in Palestine from the transmitted aggadic material of the Amoraic period) were compiled, almost all of them in the land of Israel.

All of these rabbinic texts are based on the discourses and lectures delivered in the synagogues and houses of study during the Tannaitic and Amoraic periods on Sabbaths and festivals, during lifecycle events (birth, marriage, and death), and on other public occasions. They draw on the link with all strata of the people and incorporate many folklore elements, including folktales. Some of the stories told by the sages are expanded biblical narratives. Others are biographical legends about biblical figures, about some of the sages themselves, and about other historical personages canonized by the people. There are also historical legends, exempla, animal fables, parables, ghost stories, tall tales, and humorous stories. The existence of several variants of the same story in Talmudic literature is evidence

of their folklore origins, as are the elements of folk-literature poetics that inform them. In some, one can clearly discern the influence of the folk literature of neighboring peoples, and especially Babylonian and Persian motifs.

The Jewish Folktale in the Middle Ages

A number of compositions from the Middle Ages contain folktales reworked by authors of that period. Some of them represent continuity with the Talmudic tradition, but there are also stories not known to have been written down previously. The earliest of these works is the *Midrash Aseret Hadibrot* (Midrash of the Ten Commandments), which dates from the eighth or ninth century. This book continues the earlier midrashic tradition in both its name and its structure (it is ordered by biblical verses, for which it offers homiletic interpretations). In a departure, however, the narrative element is emphasized at the expense of the moralistic element. An important anthology of stories is the ninth-century *Alpha Beta De'Ben Sira* (Alphabet of Ben Sira). Its frame narrative recounts how the child Ben Sira, summoned to the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, answered each of the king's twenty-two questions (corresponding to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet) with a folktale. Some of these narratives became an integral part of the later Jewish folk tradition, notably those about Lilith, the Queen of Sheba, and the animals in Noah's ark. These two works, produced in the Mesopotamian-Persian cultural sphere, reveal its influence, as well as that of books that circulated in the region, and were known also to Jews, such as the *Tales of Kalila and Dimna* and the *Tales of Sindabar* (Sindbad).

Other important works are the *Hibbur yafeh meha-yeshuah* (An Elegant Compilation Concerning Relief after Adversity) by the outstanding Talmudist Rabbi Nissim ben Jacob of Kairouan (eleventh century); *Sefer ha-Ma'asim* (Book of Deeds, France, twelfth century), whose tales are based on the European exemplum; and *Sefer ha-Hasidim* (Book of the Pious), composed by Rabbi Judah the Pious in Germany in the thirteenth century. This last work, which consists of some 400 stories, is a key document of the German Pietists and of medieval tales in general.

Among the works that include expansions on biblical narratives but frequently go far beyond the biblical text are *Midrash va-Yosha*, *Toldot Moshe* (The Chronicles of Moses),

Sippur Abraham (The Story of Abraham), and *Sefer ha-Yashar* (Book of Pietists), written in the late Middle Ages. All of them build on a biblical core that serves as the nucleus for a new story that is fully developed and independent of the Bible and whose world and style are in tune with the Middle Ages.

The historical legend is another important medieval genre. Prominent in this category is the *Sefer Josippon* (Book of Josippon), written in southern Italy in the tenth century. It is based on the historical works of Josephus Flavius but adds material taken from the Talmudic sages and the early Middle Ages to create a sort of

historical novel typical of the period. Another historical composition is the *Megilat Ahima'az* (Scroll of Ahima'az), a family chronicle written by Ahima'az ben Paltiel in southern Italy in the eleventh century. The *Sefer Ha'Zikhronot* (Book of Memoirs), produced in Germany in the early fourteenth century, is a Jewish folk history running from the Creation until the End of Days. *Shalsholet ha-kabbalah* (The Chain of Tradition) by Gedaliah ben Joseph Ibn Yahya (Italy, sixteenth century), makes extensive use of hagiographic legends in its presentation of the annals of Torah scholars from the earliest times to the author's own day.

Animal fables and parables were also popular genres in the Middle Ages. They can be found in various works, of which the most important is the *Mishlei shualim* (Fox Parables) of Berechiah ben Natronai the Punctuator (thirteenth century).

The Folktale in the Modern Era

The transcription of folktales within Jewish cultures and communities, to preserve and publish them, goes back to the seventeenth century, but no scholarly pretensions were involved. Serious documentation and research had to wait for the nineteenth century. The *Mayse Bukh* (Mayse Book: Book of Jewish Tales and Legends), a Yiddish collection of 257 tales compiled by Jacob ben Abraham, was printed in Basel at the start of the seventeenth century. At the end of the century, Eliezer Lieberman translated a collection of historical legends transcribed by his father from Hebrew into Yiddish. This volume was published in Amsterdam in 1696. Another important work, which expresses the cultural identity of the Sephardic Jews, is the Judeo-Spanish *Me'am Lo'ez* (Me'am Lo'ez—The Torah Anthology) by Ya'acov Culi.

Folktales were central to Hasidism from its early days in the eighteenth century. In addition to the traditional folktales that Jews had always told, two types emerged to occupy an important role in Hasidic religious practice because they were perceived as a form of divine worship with the potential to rectify the world. The first of these categories is the *Märchen*, which only the *zaddik* (rebbe) himself may tell. Some of these wonder tales are borrowed from the neighboring peoples of Eastern Europe. The Hasidim believed that when the rebbe reworked and told them, he was amending both the story and the world. One such book is the *Sefer ha-Ma'assiyot* (A Book of Tales), which collects tales told by Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav. The second category is the praise tale, the hagiographic legends that the Hasidim told about their rebbes. The best-known collection of these is the *Shivhei ha-Besht* (Praises of the Baal Shem Tov, 1814). The most prominent anthology of Sephardic tales from this period is *Oseh Pele* (The Miracle Worker), edited by Joseph Shabbetai Farhi and first published in Livorno in 1864.

As noted, the collection of folktales for documentation and scholarship began in the nineteenth century. In 1897, Dr. Max Grunwald founded the *Gesellschaft für jüdische Volkskunde* (Society for Jewish Folklore) and edited its periodical,

the *Mitteilungen für jüdische Volkskunde*, from 1898 to 1922. In Eastern Europe, the collection of folk materials began in the nineteenth century and accelerated in the early twentieth century. Between 1912 and 1914, the first ethnographic expedition, headed by S. An-Ski (Solomon Zainwil Rapaport), traveled through the small towns of Volhynia and Podolia collecting folk materials, including folktales. A group of transcribers led by Noah Prylucki, who was inspired by the author J. L. Peretz, was active in Warsaw. The institution that collected folktales most intensively was YIVO, the Jewish Scientific Institute, established in 1920. Many of its treasures were lost during the Holocaust; some are now housed at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York City.

In Israel, Dov Noy founded the Israel Folktale Archives in Haifa in 1955. Housed today at the University of Haifa, its holdings of 23,000 tales constitute the largest single collection of Jewish folktales in the world.

One of the unusual traits of Jewish folktales is their polyglot existence. Jews generally told their stories in the vernacular of their own community—Yiddish, Judezmo (Ladino), Judeo-Arabic, and so on. Jewish folktales include all of the genres found in the poetics of folk literature. The topics are diverse: there are accounts of the relations between Jews and Gentiles, deliverance from blood libels, martyrdom, and so forth; stories about Jewish settlements in various countries and the founding of major Jewish communities there; legends about holy men, ghosts, and demons; ethical principles such as charity, and the ritual precepts between human beings and God and the social precepts governing relations among people; and stories about festivals and life-cycle ceremonies, including circumcision, bar mitzvah, marriage, burial, and the comforting of mourners.

International wonder tales have also penetrated the corpus. The holdings of the Israel Folktale Archives include many of these. Sometimes, distinctly Jewish elements have penetrated these global stories, in the person of King Solomon, the prophet Elijah, and so on. Sometimes the plot format is modified to create a Jewish oikotype. Another interesting phenomenon is the alteration that takes place in an international wonder tale when it is transmuted from a *Märchen* into a Jewish legend.

Modern Israel is developing its own ethnic culture. The folktales of the various groups of immigrants draw on the stories they have brought with them from their countries of origin, but in Israel they are substantially transformed by the new culture. In addition, new stories of immigration and social integration are created to express the encounter with Israeli landscapes, food, other Jewish groups, and Arab society. The emerging myths of Israeli society constitute another important genre. These are the “big” cultural stories that seek to reinforce the glue that holds the new society together. They include stories about the defense of Tel Hai, the Masada narrative, the Tower and Stockade settlements, the submarine Dakar, and others. Place stories have also been created. These focus on the early

days of Zionist settlement and are linked with local personalities. Kibbutz stories are central to this category.

Israeli culture also has many humorous stories, jests, and jokes. Scholars compare them to the humor of Jews in the diaspora. The most thoroughly studied form of the Israeli humorous tale is the Palmach *chizbat*. These are humorous tales that are identified with Palmach, the elite military units of the Jewish underground during the last years of the British mandate in Palestine. According to the popular image, the stories were told in the evenings, around the campfire as members of the Palmach entertained themselves. With the publication of a collection of these tales, this genre came to symbolize quintessential Israeli humor. However, the term is borrowed from dialectical Palestinian Arabic, in which it is the feminine plural form of the word *chizba*, a lie. Although the stories include, in addition to original tales, Hebrew versions of Arabic, traditional Jewish tales, and internationally known narratives, they express the symbols and views of Israeli youth in their attempt to distance themselves from the cultural heritage of the diaspora. The *chizbat* is always associated with Israeli reality, often containing a grain of truth. It deals with real events and real people who are familiar to the narrating society. Its language is Hebrew, interspersed with words in Arabic, Yiddish, Russian, and English. After the establishment of the state of Israel, there was a marked decline in the narration of these tales, although a popularly published additional collection purported to prove the opposite. In the transformation of the genre, the narration situation remained, but its content changed, and the term refers to horror stories told by teenagers around the campfire.

Haya Bar-Itzhak

See Also Ethnic Folklore; Folktale; Religion, Folk.

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Joke

A form of stylized verbal, visual, or physical play that is meant to be humorous within its performance frame. Jokes frequently take the form of brief oral narratives—for example, the tall tale, the shaggy dog story, the comic anecdote, and the humorous folktale. There are also riddle jokes, gesture jokes, and various forms of pictorial jokes. Or a joke may be condensed into a witty one-liner and spoken in conversation or written on a public wall. And dyadic jokes (private jokes between two people), intentional or unintentional, may emerge interpersonally and become a traditional feature of a particular personal relationship. Spoken, written, printed, drawn, or gestured—whether performed one on one in small intimate groups and before large groups convened for the purpose of secular or religious ritual, photocopied and passed or posted anonymously in offices, distributed by electronic mail, faxed halfway around the world, or appropriated by popular culture to be sold as jest books, on coffee cups, and on T-shirts—jokes provide moments of witty entertainment while disclosing culture as a site of constant conflict and negotiation.

Performances of jokes, as a form of humor and play, are culturally “marked” forms of communication—that is, they are invoked through some culturally agreed upon means as not being earnest or serious information-conveying modes of everyday communication, and yet they can, as anthropologist Mary Douglas argues, offer “a symbolic pattern of a social pattern.” Jokes involve what linguist Victor Raskin calls “non-bona-fide communication,” what Sigmund Freud (the founder of psychoanalysis) refers to as “displacement,” and what sociologist Erving Goffman describes as a socially “framed” sphere or domain set apart from the “real” world. The joking frame appears to be a negotiated domain. Its license must be sanctioned by both performer and audience. Thus, jokes and joking performances, like any other form of cultural production, are enmeshed within socio-cultural power relations that they simultaneously map and disrupt.

The secular joking frame may be theorized as a liminal or liminoid domain akin to that identified with religious ritual by anthropologist Victor Turner, just as the performance of a joke might be seen as analogous to the various forms of licensed “clowning” that are performed cross-culturally. Liminality places such

performances on the edges of things, betwixt and between, in a metaphorical communicative border country. This is the domain of symbolic inversion, which, as folklorist Barbara Babcock explains in *The Reversible World: Symbolic Inversion in Art and Society*, “may be broadly defined as any act of expressive behavior which inverts, contradicts, abrogates, or in some fashion presents an alternative to commonly held cultural codes, values, and norms be they linguistic, literary, or artistic, religious, or social and political.” The result of such performances is the “carnavalesque” laughter associated by Mikhail Bakhtin, in *Rabelais and His World*, with the marketplace—a domain in which high and low meet, creating through transgression a multivocal or polyphonic dynamic ambivalence toward extant power relations. Bakhtin identifies this space and its ensuing “carnavalesque” or “grotesque” laughter with the dismemberment and re-creation of sociocultural bodies, a process that both maps ideology and decenters it. For Bakhtin, jokes and their accompanying laughter are pregnant with possibilities, what he calls “bodies in the act of becoming.”

Folklorists have been particularly active in documenting and analyzing jokes. Ronald Baker’s *Jokelore, Humorous Folktales from Indiana*, Elliott Oring’s *Israeli Humor: The Content and Structure of the Chizbat of the Palmah*, and Paul Smith’s *Reproduction Is Fun: A Book of Photocopy Joke Sheets* focus, respectively, on the jokes of a particular region, folk group, and form of transmission. Other folklorists have turned their attention to specific joke cycles (American “dead baby” jokes and “Helen Keller” jokes, Czechoslovakian, Hungarian, and Polish “Chernobyl” jokes, Romanian “Nicolae Ceaușescu” jokes, or German “Auschwitz” jokes), and yet others focus on such joking traditions as the Nigerian *Igbo njakini* (a form of satirical verbal dueling) and the function of the fool in English Morris dancing. Folklorists also foreground a need to contextualize jokes within actual performances and in relation to the broader cultural traditions specific to certain groups (Roger Abrahams’s *Deep Down in the Jungle: Negro Narrative Folklore from the Streets of Philadelphia*, Rayna Green’s “‘Magnolias Grow in Dirt’: The Bawdy Lore of Southern Women,” and Joseph Goodwin’s *More Man than You’ll Ever Be: Gay Folklore and Acculturation in Middle America*), in relation to performers’ life histories and personal aesthetics (Elliott Oring’s *Humor and the Individual*), in relation to social and political contexts (Alan Dundes’s *Cracking Jokes: Studies of Sick Humor Cycles and Stereotypes*), and in relation to socioeconomic contexts (Archie Green’s “Boss, Workman, Wife: Sneaking-Home Tales”). And folklorists have added to our understanding of how joking and related traditions enable people to acquire linguistic and cultural competence as well as to our understanding of how that competence may be used confrontationally to map interpersonal power relations.

Generally, explanations of jokes and their performances have fallen into three broad categories of humor theory: cognitive-perceptual theory, social-behavioral theory, and psychoanalytic theory. Cognitive-perceptual theory addresses the

question of why jokes are funny by focusing on linguistic and semantic inappropriateness: the use of exaggeration and distortion, misdirection, paradox, double entendre, the disclosure of hidden similarities between dissimilar things, and the linking of that which is pragmatically plausible and that which is not. In other words, jokes play with forms of textual and extra-textual incongruity and the tenuous resolution of such incongruities. Two formulations of the cognitive-perceptual approach are Victor Raskin's "semantic script-based theory" and Arthur Koestler's "bisociation theory." Raskin, for example, proposes that each joke evokes culturally extant linguistic scripts (a reference to language and its nuances) and nonlinguistic scripts (pragmatic or "encyclopedic" knowledge of the culture), which are in some way opposite to each other. Humor is thus explained in terms of the performer's ability to play on these scripts and the audience's ability to decode the (in)appropriate relationship between the scripts evoked by the performance. Similarly, Koestler argues that humor results when a situation, experience, or idea is associated or bisociated with "two self-consistent but habitually incompatible frames of reference." But rather than arguing for an aesthetic resolution, Koestler foregrounds the ways in which jokes creatively "vibrate simultaneously on two different wavelengths." Humor is thus the product of the slippage between otherwise disassociated contexts. Christie Davies applies Raskin's theory to ethnic jokes, particularly those told by dominant groups about subordinate groups: Americans about Poles, the French about Belgians, Mexicans about Regiomontanos, the English about Scots, Indians about Sikhs, Greeks about Pontians, Brazilians about the Portuguese, and eastern Canadians about Newfoundlanders. And Kenneth Lincoln uses Koestler's theory to analyze bicultural play in Native American humor.

Although cognitive-perceptual theorists address incongruity in order to explain why jokes are humorous, sociobehavioral theorists examine joking relationships in order to identify social structure (kin-based joking relationships in preindustrial societies and such non-kin-based joking relationships as small-group formations based on friendship or work in industrial society) and to explain the purposes that joking serves, for example, how "social structure is linked to life processes" through actual joking performances. Anthropologists, as Mahadev Apte notes, have explained how joking releases sexual and aggressive impulses, provides emotional catharsis and communication, establishes social etiquette, enhances and defines small-group identity, releases work-related tension, and enables social bonding and an exploration of closeness or intimacy in social relations. R. H. Lowie was, for instance, among the first anthropologists to suggest that joking functions as a form of social control—in other words, that jokes enculturate people within extant power relations. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown has argued that by serving as a means to reduce hostility, release tension, and avoid conflict, joking enhances social harmony and stability. And Mary Douglas, though acknowledging that jokes are a form of "permitted disrespect," has disclosed the ways in

which jokes provide “an image of the leveling of hierarchy, the triumph of intimacy over formality, of unofficial values over official ones.” As Lincoln explains, “it could be that jokes *disorganize* the monostructures of society in order to *reorganize* a static and suspect order into polymorphous, kinetic ‘play.’”

Whereas sociobehavioral approaches examine joking relationships in order to theorize social relations, psychoanalytic and related “release” theories explore suppression/repression in respect to the individual psyche. Arguing that all people operate under constraints to think, speak, and act in certain ways, release theories suggest that laughter “provides relief from mental, nervous and/or psychic energy and thus ensures homeostasis after a struggle, tension, strain, etc.” (Lincoln 1993). Thus, Freud suggests that the “pleasure in jokes has seemed to us to arise from an *economy in expenditure upon inhibition*,” or, as others also argue, “our sense of humor frees us from the chains of our perceptual, conventional, logical, linguistic, and moral systems.” Freud further explains that when “a joke is not an aim in itself—that is, where it is not an innocent one—there are only two purposes that it may serve, and these two can themselves be sub-sumed under a single heading. It is either a *hostile* joke (serving the purpose of aggressiveness, satire, or defense) or an *obscene* joke (serving the purpose of exposure).” Martha Wolfenstein’s *Children’s Humor: A Psychological Analysis* and Gershon Legman’s *No Laughing Matter: An Analysis of Sexual Humor* apply the psychoanalytic approach, respectively, to the jokes of children and of adult males. Alan Dundes and Roger Abrahams have drawn on Freudian analysis to theorize racial and sexual displacement and aggression in the American elephant joke cycle that was popular in the 1960s. And in a reflexive turn, Elliott Oring’s *Jokes of Sigmund Freud: A Study in Humor and Jewish Identity* examines Jewish identity through an analysis of Freud’s favorite jokes.

Although Freudian analysis has been productively applied to male joking patterns, other theories, women argue, need to be explored in order to address female joking. One possibility is suggested by a turn to Jacques Lacan and the French feminists (Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray, and Julia Kristeva) influenced by Lacan’s description of Western discourse as “phallogocentric” (centered and organized through the symbolic phallus). Phallogocentrism, Lacan argues, manifests itself in Western discourse in terms of vocabulary and syntax, rules of logic, inclination toward fixed classifications and oppositions, and paradigms equating validity and objectivity. In order to counter phallogocentrism, French feminists urge women to turn to their own bodies and, like their American counterparts, to their own experiences in order to define and redefine female realities. This is, Regina Barreca argues, exactly what women do when they tell jokes. Thus, as Cathy Preston, discussing a bawdy Cinderella joke, has noted, “just as our bodies may be said to laugh at our attempts to control and thereby erase them, so, when we tell the joke, we laugh at cultural attempts to control and thereby erase us.”

To joke is to perform as trickster, a figure in Native American and African tales who is described by Lincoln and others as “a mythic, binary *bricoleur* at the crossroads of cultures-in-process: mediatively vital, bisociatively multiplex, liminally alert, comically ubiquitous, normatively and often inversely funny.” Jokes map culture as a site of constant conflict between self-representation and others’ misrepresentations of us, but, as Vine Deloria Jr. philosophically speculates, “when a people can laugh at themselves and laugh at others and hold all aspects of life together without letting anybody drive them to extremes, then it seems to me that people can survive.”

Cathy Lynn Preston

See Also Esoteric/Exoteric Factor; Fool; Riddle Joke; Trickster; Verbal Duel.

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Jungian Psychology

The psychological approach, known also as *analytical psychology*, envisaged by Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961), a Swiss psychiatrist and early proponent of Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalytic theories. The Jungian system adopted a broader

perspective than that of Freud by including spiritual and futuristic factors; it also interpreted disruptive emotional processes in the individual as a search for wholeness, termed *individuation*.

Jung, the son of a Protestant cleric, showed from childhood an inclination toward solitude, daydreaming, and imaginative thinking; he also admired archaeology and hoped to make it his career (but ended up studying medicine and related sciences). These early tendencies greatly influenced his adult work. After graduating in medicine in 1902, Jung developed a diagnostic system in which patients were asked to respond to stimulus words; this technique of “word association” revealed the presence of what Jung called “complexes.” This novel approach became widely adopted and led to a close collaboration with Freud, whose book *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) Jung had read. Subsequently, Jung became one of Freud’s disciples and protégés; Freud referred to him as the “crown prince.”

However, a divergence of views began to grow between the two after a fairly short period of formal association. Perhaps the most basic points of disagreement between Freud and Jung focused on the nature of libido (psychic energy or instinctual manifestations that tend toward life) and the structure of the psyche (mind or personality). Their differences became pronounced with the publication of Jung’s *Psychology of the Unconscious*, in which he deemphasized the role of sex and expressed a different view of the biological force Freud had labeled the libido. Jung continued on this independent path, and his break with Freud, whom he still admired, became total in 1914. During the next 47 years, Jung cultivated his own theories, drawing on a wide knowledge of religion, mythology, history, and non-European cultures; he observed native cultures in Asia (India), North America (New Mexico), and Africa (Kenya) and found his own dreams and the fantasies of his childhood to be quite relevant to the cultures he was observing. In 1921, he published *Psychological Types*, in which he dealt with the relationship between the conscious and unconscious and proposed the “extrovert” and the “introvert” personality types.

Whereas Freud saw the libido in predominantly sexual and “savage” terms, Jung perceived the libido to be generalized life energy, with biological-sexual drives constituting only one of its parts. Jung saw this energy as expressing itself in growth and reproduction, as well as in other kinds of human activities depending on the social and cultural milieu. Thus, according to Jung, libidinal energy in the presexual phase (3 to 5 years of age) is basically asexual; it serves the functions of nutrition and growth—not the Oedipal complex, as Freud postulated. Conflict and rivalries develop among siblings dependent on a mother for the satisfaction of such basic needs as food and safety. As the child matures, these essentially nonsexual needs become overlaid with sexual functions. Libidinal energy takes a heterosexual form only after puberty.

With reference to the structure of personality, Jung saw the psyche, or mind, as consisting of three levels: the personal conscious, the personal unconscious,

and the collective unconscious. Like a small island in the ocean, the tip visible above the water corresponds to the personal conscious, the submerged portion that can be seen corresponds to the personal unconscious, and the invisible foundation that connects the island to the earth's crust corresponds to the collective unconscious. This paradigm reflects the influence of archaeological stratigraphy on Jung's worldview.

Jung's approach to therapy may be seen as holistic; it rests on a rationale of showing the close parallels between ancient myths and psychotic fantasies and explaining human motivation in terms of a larger creative energy. He aimed at reconciling the diverse states of personality, which he saw as being divided into the introvert-extrovert polarity mentioned earlier, as well as into the four functions of sensing, intuiting, feeling, and thinking. And by understanding how the personal unconscious is unified with the collective unconscious, a patient can achieve a state of individuation, or wholeness of self.

Hasan El-Shamy

See Also Archetype; Psychological Approach.

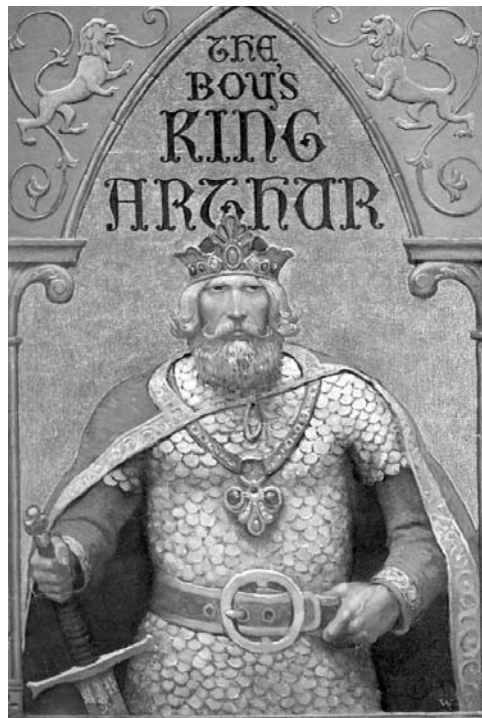
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K

King Arthur

Legendary British king (probably sixth century CE) represented by medieval romancers as the paragon of chivalry. In Great Britain, he is often the hero of popular and local legend. A capable British leader with a similar name probably did exist in the fifth or sixth century, but there is little evidence of this possibility. Gildas, a monastic historian (ca. 540), tells of a successful but unnamed war hero who may have been Arthur. Gildas's record, along with such works as the Welsh *Mabinogion* (ca. eleventh century) and Geoffrey of Monmouth's fabricated *History of the Kings of Britain* (ca. 1136), provided the background for medieval romances such as the French *Le Morte d'Arthur* (The death of King Arthur [ca. 1230–1235]). These romances presented Arthur as the champion of chivalrous knighthood and courtly love.



Frontispiece to *The Boy's King Arthur*, illustrated by N. C. Wyeth, 1917. (Lanier, Sidney, ed. *The Boy's King Arthur*, 1917)

Whatever the veracity of Arthur's historical existence, there can be no doubt as to his significance as a folk hero and literary figure. Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* (1485) did much to standardize and establish Arthur's own story, and most modern writers who make use of Arthurian themes base their works on Malory's. In brief, Arthur is the son of Uther Pendragon, king of Britain, and Igraine, the wife of the duke of Cornwall. Because Arthur is conceived out of wedlock, he is raised not in the king's household, but anonymously. Ignorant of his parentage, Arthur proves his right to the throne through his ability to draw a magical sword from the stone and anvil where it has been trapped by the magician, Merlin. The faithlessness of Arthur's wife, Guinevere, ultimately causes the downfall of his kingdom, and Arthur begins his quest for the Holy Grail, sending his knights in search of the cup that Christ drank from at the Last Supper in the hope that the cup's holiness will restore prosperity to his land. In local British tradition, particularly that of Wales and Cornwall, Arthur will return one day to aid his country in its time of direst need. According to many local legends, he waits for this hour in the company of a host of sleeping knights in a variety of caves and hollow hills throughout Britain.

King Arthur is remarkable in that his character has been developed in both popular tradition and in high literature. The folk characterization of the figure differs from that of the literary one: the Arthur of popular tradition is both more human and more godlike. The Arthur of the folk is apt to make mistakes or to fly into rages, unlike his staid and just literary counterpart; similarly, the folk Arthur may have supernatural powers that are rarely credited to him in literature. Whatever the interpretation of his character, Arthur is never represented alone but is always in the company of a full retinue consisting of consort (Guinevere), favorite (Bedwyr, or Lancelot), treacherous sister (Morgan), treacherous nephew or son (Mordred), wizard and adviser (Merlin), and any number of loyal knights. The popular variations on Arthur's story tell of his own exploits, while the more literary representations tend to focus on those of his knights and the downfall of his kingdom. But Arthurian literature nearly always ends with the promise, borrowed directly from folk tradition, that Arthur will rise again in spirit if not in body as England's "past and future king."

Elizabeth E. Wein

See Also Arthurian Lore.

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L

Language, Play

Artfully constructed and playfully manipulated oral tradition. Constant delight in the manipulation of language is a hallmark of human behavior. It becomes apparent at the earliest age in children, who rarely fail to respond with pleasure to the games adults use to distract them while at the same time instructing them. Poking, tickling with accompanying jingles and rhymes, rhymes that teach the infant the names of facial features, and chants accompanying knee- and foot-bouncing games all contribute in important ways to the baby's development and, in particular, to its early familiarization with the possibilities of language.

As the child grows older and is more susceptible to reason, while also becoming more self-consciously assertive, he or she discovers the frustration of put-offs, evasive answers, and other forms of adult teasing; the child gradually grasps the potential of such language use and employs it to his or her own ends with other children. This particular skill is developed and honed in grade school, as children discover the humor inherent in the jeers and taunts they level at one another (a trait that carries over into adult life, though normally with greater sophistication). The calls, cheers, chants, and yells associated with interclass and interschool rivalries all promote an awareness of the power of language; the well-documented richness of school-age lore—with verses mocking school, teachers, and subjects, with rhymes meant to upset, to shock, or to tease, with parodies of hymns, carols, and other songs, with backwards and nonsense verses—illustrates the linguistic inventiveness (and the conservatism) of teenagers. It is perhaps between the ages of five and fifteen that children most enjoy traditional forms of verbal play, when insults, retorts, tongue twisters, put-offs, catches, and wisecrack answers are part and parcel of everyday language use. Less consciously, perhaps, the pleasures of simple poetry are appreciated in the innumerable rhymes and songs that accompany ball-bouncing and rope-skipping games and similar activities.

As children gradually enter adulthood, the same pleasures remain, though in a more developed form. Rhymes poking fun at people from neighboring communities or regions—*blasons populaires*—often demonstrate not only skill with language but also a degree of intellectual creativity spiced with honest malice; the same trait is evident in the attribution of nicknames.

Proverbs and proverbial sayings, especially those made with humorous intent, suggest appropriate courses of action and do so in a way more acceptable to the

targets of such verbal forms. Similes, exaggerations, metaphors, adult retorts, and Wellerisms all add color and texture to the basic requirement of communication.

The vast array, universally attested, of riddles and related traditions demonstrates the pleasure humans always have found in the clever use of language and its ability to express realities in unusual and striking ways. Particularly appealing to young adults may be the pretended obscene riddle (which suggests an off-color answer while having a bland solution in reality), but the most commonly appealing form of riddle is undoubtedly that based on a pun. Indeed, puns and punning, which clearly attest to a conscious awareness of the play potential of speech, permeate jokes, riddling questions, and, indeed, ordinary conversation.

Gerald Thomas

See Also Children's Folklore; Games, Folk.

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Language, Secret

Language that allows its speakers to communicate with each other without being understood by noninitiates, that is, by people with whom its speakers come into contact on a more or less regular basis but from whom certain kinds of information must be withheld.

The earliest forms of secret language are found in magical formulas, the esoteric languages of primitive initiation rites, and passwords in secret societies—in other words, where the language functions as a barrier between insiders and outsiders. This function has been nowhere better documented than in the language of the criminal underworld. Indeed, the word *jargon*, now used to refer to the technical language of a trade or profession, was originally used to refer to the secret language of twelfth-century French criminals.

There is, however, a crucial difference between the jargon of doctors, nurses, hospital workers, airline pilots, military personnel, and members of other such legitimate occupations and the language of the criminal underworld. The former terminology arises out of the technical complexities of everyday life but is not usually used with the intent of deliberately deceiving or misleading the general public; the latter, by contrast, has been used both as a class badge and as a means

of masking the true meaning of its discourse to potential victims. This intent has long been documented by the police of numerous countries, and those who use such languages have given them precise names. Thus, the terms *Rotwelsch* (in Germany), *argot* (in France), *furbesco* (in Italy), *germania* (in Spain), and *cant* (in England) have all been used at different times to designate the language of the criminal classes. Likewise, in Germany, France, Spain, and England, Latin has also been used for the same purpose, an echo of which is to be found in the term *pig latin* often used by children in English-speaking countries to refer to their own brands of secret talk.

Two chief principles govern the formation of secret languages. The first involves the change of meanings for words that exist in the standard language, often by reliance on metaphorical processes, as when “automobile” is referred to as one’s “wheels” or “to kill” is rendered as “to chill.” The second principle is that of a change in the form of words, usually by means of a code. This is the principle behind the creation of pig latin, documented with a variety of codes and a variety of names. A version recorded in South Wales in the 1950s and used by a group of ten-year-old boys, Eguage, required the addition of the syllable *-eg* before audible vowel sounds; in France in the 1960s, teenagers made use of Javanais, involving the addition of the syllable *-av* before vowel sounds.

Such secret languages tend to be restricted to youthful peer groups, however, and the sheer joy of mastering and using the code, especially in front of teachers or parents, is certainly more important than any criminal design. This was true for the short-lived Californian language Boontling, which flourished between 1880 and 1920 and was created by young boys. It relied chiefly on the abbreviation and deformation of words rather than on the addition of syllables.

Gerald Thomas

See Also Children’s Folklore; Esoteric/Exoteric Factor.

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Latino Folklore

Folklore is often considered the old-fashioned or countrified aspects of the general culture. However, folklore is living culture that is generated, transmitted, and reconstituted among contemporary human beings in all kinds of communities.

Because cultural phenomena constantly move between and among communication spheres—from print media to oral storytelling to television and back in a constant cycle of reproduction—folklore can be found in popular culture, mass-mediated culture, and even elite or avant-garde culture.

The three largest Spanish-speaking groups in the United States—Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cuban Americans—have distinctive cultural histories and settlement patterns. For instance, centuries-old Mexican American communities of the Southwest were forcibly annexed to the United States in 1848. The United States claimed Puerto Rico as a protectorate in 1898, and in 1917 declared all Puerto Ricans to be U.S. citizens. However, massive migration from the island to the United States occurred only after World War II. Puerto Ricans settled primarily in New York City and the Northeast. Cubans arrived next as refugees from the 1959 socialist revolution on their island. They settled primarily in Miami and New York. Since the 1980s, immigrants from other Latin American countries and mainland México have come to the United States in increasing numbers, settling not only in the large cities but also in towns and rural areas throughout the country. Many of these new immigrants are undocumented when they arrive, and they must struggle to obtain legal status.

Nevertheless, Latinas and Latinos of distinct nationalities share a common Spanish Roman Catholic heritage. In the U.S. Southwest, México, and Central America, this heritage mixed with indigenous traditions to form distinctive new world cultures. In the Caribbean and Brazil, the early extermination of indigenous groups and the importation of African slaves resulted in a strong African cultural influence. Sometimes common cultural traditions express Spanish colonial roots; sometimes they represent a later dissemination of ideas from one group to others; and sometimes they express contemporary experiences that Latinos/as of many nationalities share.

The Latino/a ritual calendar starts with the New Year, when families gather to celebrate renewal. Many households customarily play the song “El Año Viejo” (The Old Year) at the stroke of twelve and dance in the new year. This popular song was composed by Venezuelan Crescencio Salcedo and recorded by the Mexican singer Tony Camargo in 1953, and it has become a seasonal tradition. On January 6, the Día de los Reyes Magos (Three Kings Day), many children receive their Christmas presents, not from Santa but from the Three Kings who arrived in Bethlehem to present gifts to the Christ child.

During Holy Week, the week before Easter, Catholics contemplate the last days of Christ, his betrayal, humiliation, death, and resurrection. Many immigrant communities reenact Christ’s final days on Holy Thursday or Good Friday. Called La Judea or La Pasión, this street procession sometimes culminates in a simulated crucifixion. In the Southwest, a related tradition of *Penitentes*, or lay religious brotherhoods, arose in isolated communities during the nineteenth century. *Penitentes*

perform public and private expressions of atonement. They sponsor processions of penitents bearing heavy crosses or whipping themselves. At the same time, the *Penitentes* provide important sources of mutual aid to their members. They built distinctive *moradas*, or meeting halls, for their activities that continue to dot the countryside.

Latino/a festivals celebrating ethnic pride and solidarity often occur during the summer months or in September, when many Latin American countries won independence from Spain. These festivals feature popular music, foods, crafts, and folk dances. Colombians may perform an old-style *cumbia*; Puerto Ricans dance the *plena* and the African-influenced *bomba*; Mexicans may dance any of a number of regional dances, from the *jarabe tapatio* of Guadalajara to the *sones* of Vera Cruz; Nicaraguans dance the *baile de marimba*. These *bailes folklóricos* represent modern choreographed versions of the social or ritual dances of earlier times. However, social dances, such as the modern *cumbia*, the *polca norteña*, *salsa*, *merengue*, and *tango*, are equally folk dances, since they embody the expressive styles of distinctive contemporary groups.

Long-standing Latino/Latina communities may also commemorate important community events annually. The Fiesta of Santa Fe, New Mexico, for example, reenacts the “bloodless reconquest” of the Pueblo Indians by Don Diego de Vargas in 1692. The 1992 video documentary *Gathering Up Again: The Fiesta of Santa Fe* shows how this Latino/a tradition both resists Anglo domination and participates in the oppression of its own other, the Native American. While the fiesta purportedly celebrates the union of three cultures—the Spanish, the indigenous, and the Anglo American—it paradoxically demonstrates their continuing segregation and the inequalities and personal injuries such divisions produce. Other southwestern communities perform the *matachines* ritual dance, which reenacts the conquest and conversion of Moctezuma, the sixteenth-century Aztec ruler.

Latino/a immigrant communities often unite around a national festival from their country of origin. For instance, Miami’s Nicaraguan community celebrates La Gritería (The Cries) on December 8 in honor of the patron saint of Nicaragua, La Purísima Concepción de María. During this festival homeowners and businesses set up and decorate outside altars. Groups of singers walk from one altar to the next, stopping at each to sing traditional *villancicos*, or songs in honor of the Virgin. After each performance, a group member shouts, “¿Quién causa tanta alegría?” (Who causes such happiness?), to which the rest respond, “¡La Virgen María!” (The Virgin Mary!). The owner of the altar then dispenses sweets and treats to the singer. Puerto Ricans, on the other hand, hold *parrandas*, or social gatherings, around Christmastime, when they sing *aguinaldos*, or Christmas carols.

The Virgin of Guadalupe, once the patron saint of México, is now the patron of all Latin America. Many communities venerate this Indian or mestiza Virgin on December 12. In communities where Mexicans predominate, devotees often

hold a predawn service called “Las Mañanitas.” Mariachi bands visit the church at 4:00 A.M. to serenade the Virgin with a version of the Mexican birthday song: “Estas son las mañanitas que cantaba el Rey David. Hoy por ser día de tu santo, te las cantamos a ti. Despierta, mi bien despierta, mira que ya amaneció, ya los pajaritos cantan, la luna ya se metió” (This is the song that King David sang. Today, for your saint’s day, we sing it to you. Wake up, my friend, wake up. Look it’s already morning. The little birds are already singing. The moon has gone in.). Such rituals demonstrate the loving familiarity the faithful feel toward the miraculous Virgin.

Many communities also perform a children’s pageant that reenacts the Virgin’s apparition in 1531, shortly after the conquest. Legend has it that the Virgin ordered the Indian shepherd Juan Diego to tell the bishop to build her a church where a temple to the Aztec goddess Tonantzin had stood. She directed him to pick flowers on an ordinarily barren hill and wrap them in his cloak. When Juan Diego unfurled the cloak, the authorities found the image of the Virgin imprinted on the cloth and built the church. The Virgin of Guadalupe is an extremely popular icon for Latinos/as. Wrapped in a blue cloak decorated with golden stars and surrounded by a golden halo, she can be seen not only in churches and home altars but also in or on murals, calendars, T-shirts, and body tattoos.

On the nine nights preceding Christmas, many Latino/a communities host Las Posadas. These partly chanted play processions reenact Joseph and Mary’s search for shelter in Bethlehem. Costumed participants travel from house to house requesting entry, while homeowners ceremoniously refuse to let them in. Finally, a host admits the group and rewards them with festival foods. On the final night, Christmas Eve, the performing group reenacts Christ’s birth in the manger. A similar tradition from the Southwest is called *Los Pastores*, the shepherds’ play.

Of course, the growing number of Latino/a Protestants do not participate in religious customs involving the worship of saints or the Virgin Mary. They may, however, perform plays from the Protestant tradition, such as *The Everyman Play*, where Satan and Jesus battle for a poor sinner’s soul. Protestant churches also possess their own body of hymns and contemporary religious music in Spanish.

Another Latino/a theater tradition is rooted in the history of Latino/a labor organizing. These theater groups use improvisational techniques to raise public consciousness about community problems such as worker exploitation, police brutality, domestic violence, and alcohol and drug addiction. The United Farm Workers’ Organizing Committee’s El Teatro Campesino, which initially formed in Southern California in the mid-1960s, was one of the earliest and most active of these groups. Latino/a mural art also developed out of earlier social and even revolutionary movements (*see Chicano Mural Movement*). The brilliant murals found in poor and working-class urban barrios document a history of struggle, contemporary social ills, and ethnic pride. In the late 1980s and 1990s, graffiti



Yanelis Ganuzas, center, dances during her Quinceañera party in Hialeah, Florida, 2009. (AP/Wide World Photos)

writers also began to paint murals using their distinctive graphic style. In large cities like New York and Philadelphia, these self-taught artists spray-painted elaborate memorial walls in remembrance of those who had been murdered in gang wars. Residents' attitudes toward these memorial walls were mixed—were they warnings against or glorifications of gang violence?

Latino/a families celebrate many individual rites of passage, but none has become so popular as the *quinceañera*, or fifteenth birthday. Once a coming-out party for the daughters of society families, the “sweet fifteen” party is now a popular family celebration among all social classes. The young debutante, accompanied by a court of friends, presides at a formal party that includes dancing and a festive meal. In Puerto Rican neighborhoods, one can find small businesses devoted to the production of *capias*, or hand-made party favors for *quinceañeras* and other rites of passage. These favors, assembled from lace, ribbon, manufactured plastic ornaments, paper, wire, and other materials, serve as treasured mementos of important events. Another fixture in Puerto Rican neighborhoods is the *casita*, small one-room wooden house built in a vacant lot or garden. *Casitas* serve as retreats for men, who visit and play cards together in these nostalgic invocations of their rural island homes.

Latino/a communities also share a rich tradition of alternate medical beliefs and practices. The humoral theory of medicine, that is, the notion that illnesses and cures can be categorized as hot or cold, forms the basis for many home remedies. According to this theory, a healthy body is warm and moist. A person may become ill either because she/he experiences a dramatic change in temperature, as would occur if one took a cold shower immediately after working up a sweat, or by over-consuming substances categorized as hot or cold. Many Latino/a community members consult *curanderos* (healers), *espiritistas* (spiritual healers), or *santeros* (artisans of religious images) for medical, psychological, and social problems before or in addition to seeking standard medical treatment. In the Southwest, the *caso*, or account of a miraculous healing, is so common that folklorists regard it as a specific genre of folk narrative. There is even a strong tradition of parody *casos*, jokes told by some Latinos/as disparaging the beliefs of others. Certain healers achieved widespread and long-lasting fame, becoming the subjects of folk legend. Such was the case of turn-of-the-century south Texan Don Pedro Jaramillo. Rudolfo Anaya's novelistic account, in *Bless Me, Última* (1972), of a rural New Mexican childhood, contains a compelling literary portrait of a Latina *curandera*. Yet urban *salseros* (salsa musicians) also commonly pay tribute to the alternative medicine of *mamis* (mothers), *abuelitas* (grandmothers), and *curanderos*, as is evident in Eddie Palmieri's 1998 composition "Dueño del Monte" (King of the Mountain).

In Latino communities of Caribbean origin, an individual may visit a *botánica*, a kind of alternative pharmacy that offers both spiritual and herbal supplies. There she may consult a spiritualist, a person who communes with the dead to advise clients on personal or medical problems. Spiritualism is a nineteenth-century religion that continues to have followers in both Anglo-American and Latin American communities. Alternately, a devotee of *santería* may visit a *santero* for advice or ritual cure. *Santería* is an African-derived religion that involves divination, spirit possession, and a strong respect for nature. Practiced in *casas*, or houses, outside the Catholic Church, *santería* has its own priests and rituals. Yet practitioners see no conflict between their Roman Catholic and *santería* beliefs. In colonial-era Cuba, enslaved Africans worshipped their *orishas* (powers or divine emissaries). Yet they disguised this "pagan" religion by associating each *orisha* with a Catholic saint. Thus, Santa Bárbara was identified with Changó, the Yoruba God of fire and thunder. Today, Latinos/as of many nationalities embrace *santería*. The film documentary *The King Does Not Lie: The Initiation of a Shango Priest* (1992) shows how *santería* is a growing, multi-racial religion that continues to speak to contemporary human needs.

Latinos/as' common bilingual experience has led to interesting forms of code-switching, verbal play, and a great wealth of jokes. Spanish-language jokes maintain boundaries not only between Latinos and "gringos" but also between Latinos who remain outside the mainstream culture and those who are more assimilated.

Joking also reinforces class and gender boundaries, as well as interethnic boundaries among different Latino nationalities. For instance, in Miami, newer Nicaraguan and South American immigrants express hostility toward entrenched Cubans by making them the butts of their jokes. Joking may equally function to express solidarity—some Guatemalans in southern Delaware use their native Maya tongue only to trade jokes on rare occasions when they encounter others who speak their natal language.

In this television age, one is more likely to find folktales about the idiot-heroes Pedro de Urdemales and Juan Bobo, or the wiley Tío Conejo and Tío Coyote, in cartoons or in children's books rather than recited orally. These trickster figures demonstrate a blatant disregard for custom and morality but often triumph in the end anyway.

Legends about encounters with the devil, or demonic dogs or pigs, however, continue to be recounted among friends. One of the most popular revenants is La Llorona, or the weeping woman, who lingers near bodies of water. Legend has it that La Llorona either married a man without her parents' approval or became pregnant by him before marriage. She had one or more children, whom either she, their father, or her own father drowned. Subsequently, the young woman went mad and wandered the countryside weeping for her lost children. She led a dissolute life, died, went to heaven, and was sent back to earth to search for her children. The legend has been dramatized repeatedly on television. Poet and novelist Sandra Cisneros alludes to it in her short story "Woman Hollering Creek" (1991). Singer Joan Báez takes up the theme in her 1972 song "La Llorona." Oral transmission has been equally powerful; teens of many ethnicities and regions today relate their own strange encounters with the wailing woman.

Another storytelling tradition, the *corrido*, or ballad, is a narrative song usually performed with the accompaniment of a guitar. Américo Paredes wrote extensively both about the *corrido* and the distinctive new world communities that produced them (1995). Sung in the language of a dominated group, they provided a unique perspective on society and history that was rarely voiced in mainstream U.S. history books or media. For instance, the nineteenth-century Texas Ranger was romanticized in the Anglo television program *The Lone Ranger*. For Tejanos (Texans of Mexican descent) he was a despised tyrannical figure, the henchman of invading Anglo ranchers. In his influential work *With a Pistol in His Hand* (1958), Paredes pieces together existing legends, *corridos*, and journalistic accounts to tell the story of Gregorio Cortez, an honest farmer who fought the Rangers to protect his land, his family, and his honor.

Today, the enemy that the *corrido* hero must elude and overcome is more likely to be a representative of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) border patrol. A recent *corrido*, titled "Superman es ilegal," provides an undocumented immigrant's perspective on the racism inherent in U.S. immigration

Corrido

CORRIDO DE LA CUCARACHA

QUE NO HA SALIDO A PASEAR, PORQUE NO TIENE CARTONCITOS

La Cucaracha, la Cucaracha,
ya no quiere caminar
porque no tiene, porque no tiene
dinero para gastar.

Pobre de la Cucaracha,
se queja de corazón,
de no usar ropa planchada
por la escasez del carbón.

La ropa sin almidón,
se pone todos los días
y sin esas boberías
se me figura melón.

La Cucaracha ya suprimió
el bisteff y la remolacha,
por lo caro de la carne;
¡pobre de la Cucaracha!

Ahora, come ensalada,
verdolaga y quintonil,
porque no tiene dinero
para comprar metlapil.

También suprimió el candil
de petróleo que tenía,
y todo va suprimiendo
por la horrible carestía.

Que fea te vez Cucaracha,
con tu enagua desagüada
y antes, ¡ay! qué bonita
me parecías una ada.

La Cucaracha en cuestión
cargaba muy buena plata,
ahora con tanto cartón
anda bailando en la reata.

Se queja la Cucaracha,
de lo caro del jabón.
No encuentra combustible
toda la población.

La Cucaracha antes era
chacha simpaticona
y meneaba la cadera,
como cualquiera española.

Era la gran vivandera
y mujer de corazón,
tenía pimienta y canela
y por ning uno ilusión.



QUE GASTAR.

A los toros no faltaba
en la lumbreira de Sol,
y ahora no va ni á la esquina
por no tener ni un cartón.

Yo sé que á la Villa fué,
á jugar á la partida
y tanto alargó la mano,
que encontró la olla podrida.

Pero vá al Cinematógrafo,
es donde dan más barato
y allí está la Cucaracha,
hasta arriba como gato.

Pobre de la Cucaracha,
en qué triste situación
se encuentra esa muchacha,
pues su Juan se fué al Panteón.

La Cucaracha ya no es,
la antigua mocetona,
ahora se ve muy flaca
vieja, viehoca y pelona.

Antes tan sólo á Gambrinus,
se le miraba llegar
y ahora con esta miseria,
á la piquera va á dar.

Ya se acabó ese tiempo,
Cucarachita mía,
en que gastábamos pesos
en cualquiera pulquería.

¿Qué te pasó Cucaracha
que estás bebiendo agua pura?
bebe pulque colorado
y si no, á la sepultura.

No flores Cucarachita,
que ya la carne bajó,
y muy pronto ya diremos
la miseria se acabó.

Y me vengo á despedir
Cucaracha, Cucaracha,
que voy pronto á visitar
á mi adorada muchacha.

Adios Cucaracha mía,
te dejo mi corazón
trátalo con cariño
haslo por compasión.

Gastaba muchos meneos,
cuando bailaba boleros,
y era muy aficionada
al amor de los toreros.

Muchas veces á la calle,
salía con grande mantón
y los pollos de la esquina,
le decían: adios corazón.

IMPRENTA
de Antonio Vanegas Arroyo,
Segunda Sta. Teresa 40.
1915.

Broadside shows a full-length figure of a simply dressed woman with a shawl around her shoulders and hands on her hips. The song conveys the story of la cucaracha. *Cucaracha* literally means cockroach, but during the Mexican Revolution this term was synonymous with “camp follower” and referred to women who would follow and live with their male partners in the war camps. (Library of Congress)

The Mexican American *corrido* is one of several folkloric expressions that emerged as a truly native musical and literary form throughout greater México. The *corrido* gained a unique status following the 1860s, amid the ongoing and often violent culture clash between Mexican and Anglo Americans along the lower Rio Grande Texas–Mexican border area. The historical function of the Mexican *corrido* has been described as a social barometer of Mexican attitudes toward events affecting their lives. Its contents, poetic organization, musical form, and aesthetic history lead to an alternative interpretation of the nature of violence in Mexican and American societies as seen through the Mexican’s sense of history, music, and culture. Today most *corridos* follow a straightforward, simple narrative format providing a date, place, exposition, development, and farewell, or *despedida*. *Corridistas* (*corrido* singers), like their troubadour ancestors, sing about any newsworthy event. Many of the *corridos* from the nineteenth and early twentieth century deal with heroes like revolutionary leaders Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapáta.

Narrative folk ballads of Mexican origin typically have regular metrical features such as rhyming quatrains (abcb) and use traditional imagery. Those of “epic themes” typically refer to conflict—sometimes personal, more often social between men. One important aesthetic feature affecting both structure and style is called *fragmentismo*, the process by which fragments of ballads are torn from their context, leaving much unexplained and producing, at times, abrupt beginnings and endings. Of far greater importance than the limited negative and positive female images is the *corrido*’s larger gender politics and poetics of exclusion and repression.

Peter J. García

regulations. It begins by parodying the Superman jingle—“¿Es un pájaro, es un avión? No hombre, es un mojado” (Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No man, it’s a wet-back)—and concludes by arguing that Superman should be kicked out of the country just as the Mexican workers are. Undocumented immigrants from El Salvador and Guatemala, who fled the Central American genocide of the 1980s, developed their own distinctive narrative form called the testimonial within the context of the Sanctuary Movement. These narratives conveyed horrific and traumatic experiences that would ordinarily remain unspoken. They were packaged in a language that could stir the conscience of North American citizens and promote the case of those suing for refugee status. Thus, old narrative traditions provide a vehicle for airing new grievances, while new narratives quickly develop formulaic patterns to reflect the shared dimensions of individual experience.

Latino/a folklore is as rich in tradition as it is in creativity, as varied as the communities that produce it. At times Latino/a folklore provides a perspective distinct from that voiced in mainstream popular culture. At others, it enriches the popular culture of the English-speaking as well as the Spanish-speaking United States.

Katherine Borland

See Also Altar, Home; Ethnic Folklore; Religion, Folk.

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Legend

Short, oral prose narrative based in the reality of performers and audiences. The term *legend* is derived from the Latin word *legere* (to read); thus, the term originally labeled a piece of reading, referring to a book containing accounts of the lives of the saints arranged in the order of the Christian calendar and read on the saints' feast days at divine office. The *Christian* or *hagiographic legend* (*legende religieuse*) as a genre of literature and history can be traced to the times of the apostles. By the eighth century CE, however, numerous stories about the miracles of saints had become increasingly apocryphal and, therefore, were omitted from the official canon of the Christian church. After the division of the one and only Christian church into a multitude of denominations, religious legends proliferated, and they have continued their spread both as the authoritative voice of religious education and as its antagonist, the voice of the folk, to this day.

It is no wonder that by the end of the Middle Ages, the word *legend* had come to mean “inauthentic information” or an improbable story. During the Reformation, it became understood as a lie or fiction (Martin Luther made the pun *legende*—*lügende* [legend-lie]), indicating the recognition of the controversial nature of the legend applied in religious debate. Today, in common parlance, a legend is still regarded as an untrue story believed by the gullible.

Encompassing a broad category of works, the *heroic legend* (*legende héroïque*—*legende épique*) is identified as a long epic poem composed of traditional motifs and performed orally in song, accompanied by a musical instrument. Heroic legend tells about a known or fictional historical hero or heroine (from the Greek *herós*). Because of their miraculous origins and supernatural associations, these protagonists are endowed with supernatural powers and knowledge. Their adventures, on earth and beyond, consist of struggles against evil mortals and demons. Heroic legend of some kind is known around the world; it combines historical facts with myth and folktale elements in diverse ways, adjusting to given cultural environments. Its contents are not always easy to distinguish from parallel myths and tales.

The *folk legend*, sharing traditional elements with the religious and the heroic legend, has been defined by folklorists as one of the folklore genres. As a short, oral prose narrative, created by the people and transmitted orally from generation to generation, it has been characterized as a story that treats its unusual, extranormal, metaphysical, or supernatural topics from the vantage point of the real world of its tellers and audiences. Bearers of legend tradition identify the legend in their native terminology as “a true story,” “an account,” “what is being told,” “something passed around,” “a saying,” “a chronicle,” or “a history.” In scholarly practice, Germans and Scandinavians have opted for “a saying” or “what has been spoken” (*Sage, sagen, sagen*), and various forms of the Latin word *legenda* are adopted as the technical terms used by Anglo American and Romance language authors—*legend* (in English), *legende* (in French), *leggenda* (in Italian), *leyenda* (in Spanish), and so on.

Definition of the legend began with the founders of folkloristics, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. They pointed out its main characteristic by contrasting it to the *tale* in the introduction of the collection *Deutsche Sagen* (1816). They saw the two genres as peoples’ guides and true companions through life:

The *Märchen* is more poetic [and] the legend is more historical; the former exists securely almost in and of itself in its innate blossoming and consummation. The legend, by contrast, is characterized by a lesser variety of colors, yet it represents something special in that it adheres always to that which we all are conscious of and know well, such as a locale and a name that has been secured through history. Because of this local confinement, it

William Tell

Like the English Robin Hood, the fourteenth-century Swiss William Tell remains a figure of myth rather than history. Like many such figures, though, his legend has great staying power, not only in the folk legends and ballads of his home country but in literature, film, television, and children's literature and theater, as well as in Schiller's famous play *Wilhelm Tell* (1804).

In the basic story, the Austrian occupiers of Switzerland in the province of Uri are commanded by a despotic individual named Herman Gessler. Wishing to further humiliate the Swiss, Gessler orders a pole set up in the village square. He has his hat nailed to the top of the pole and commands that all the Swiss must bow to it. Tell, a noted archer, refuses, and so Gessler has Tell's son tied to a tree with an apple upon his head. Tell is told to split the apple in two with an arrow or bolt (some versions speak of bows, others of crossbows). Tell takes two bolts and with the first performs this near-miraculous feat. Gessler then asks why Tell had taken two bolts. The hero replies that if he had killed his own son he would have used the second bolt to kill Gessler. Doubly embarrassed, the outraged Gessler has Tell arrested and placed aboard a ship for prison. In a storm, Tell escapes from the ship by leaping onto a rock still known as "Tell's Leap." He returns to his home region and kills Gessler, providing the spark that ignites a general Swiss uprising, the eventual expulsion of the Austrians, and the establishment of the Helvetian Confederation.



William Tell. (Library of Congress)

These events are not recorded before the late fifteenth century, nearly two hundred years after they are supposed to have occurred. Nor is there any other evidence for the existence of a historical figure named William Tell. There is also little consistency in the dates and other details of the Tell legend. Although sources sometimes give a precise date for Tell's archery feat (1307), there is little or no evidence that such an event ever took place.

The apple-shooting incident is found in mythology and folklore around the world, including that of ancient Greece, Denmark, England, northern Europe, Russia, Persia, Turkey, Mongolia, and India. Like Robin Hood, Tell inhabits the shady area between the outlaw hero and the national hero.

Graham Seal

follows that the legend cannot, like the tale, find its home anywhere. Instead the legend demands certain conditions without which it either cannot exist at all, or can only exist in less perfect form. There is scarcely a spot in all of Germany where one cannot hear elaborate tales, locales on which legends are usually sown only quite sparsely. This apparent inadequacy and insignificance is conceded, but in compensation we find legends far more intimately representative. They are like the dialects of language, in which time and again one encounters the strangest words and images that have survived from ancient times—while the tales, by contrast, transport a complete piece of ancient poetry to us from the past in a single breath (Ward 1981).

Generations of folklorists elaborated on the Grimms' suggestion and specified further the differences between tale and legend, the two basic forms of narration related to each other by a shared body of motifs and episodes but standing in opposition to one another. As Max Lüthi saw it, everything the tale is, the legend is not. While scholars industriously collected prose narratives, sorted out their materials according to narrative contents and actors, and placed the texts into archives, they also prepared separate classification systems for the tale and the legend on the basis of rigorous content and style analysis. They concluded that the two genres express opposing views of the world: The *Märchen* is fiction, a fantastic reflection of reality as individual narrators consciously forge it, whereas the legend, as the presentation of the fantastic reality, aspires to feature real events of personal experience. Thus, the *Märchen* is pure fantasy, which people expect as entertainment and delight; the legend is information, answering important, existential questions. The *Märchen* is a well-tailored objective poetry that holds its audience spellbound, but when it is over, it has no aftereffect. The legend is a subjective, hesitant account that appeals to the personal concerns of average people and reports things that are breathtaking, baffling, horrendous, uncanny, shocking, bizarre, grotesque, or even funny, but that could happen to anyone while doing everyday chores. The

Märchen is the career story of a symbolic central heroic figure, but the legend has no hero or heroine—it concerns *us*. The purpose of telling a legend is to report, inform, explain, teach, advise, warn, help, or enlighten. The legend answers unuttered questions of common concern: What is it? Why is it so? Can this be true? How can such a thing happen? What can be done about it? How can it be avoided or made to happen? And since the legend seeks an answer, its message need not be encased in an artistically constructed and stabilized or conventionalized talelike frame. The ambiguity of feelings, the uncertainty, the hope, and the despair surrounding the message create a specific narrational form and style for the legend and keep the narrated text eternally unfinished, amplifiable, and fragmentary. Consequently, the researcher has to assemble numerous variants of the same story to get an idea of the extent of a type.

The form of the text is shaped by the conditions surrounding its telling. The oral legend may be performed by persons in all walks of life, among all layers of society—rich and poor, young and old, educated and uneducated. It might crop up any place where people gather for work or leisure—at village firesides; on the road to work; while walking, riding a train, or driving; or at family dinners, church socials, banquets, and professional get-togethers. In short, legends may be exchanged informally at any time, without requiring a prepared telling session.

Consequently, the teller of a legend does not have to be a recognized artist but rather someone who is interested in legendry and who has experienced at least one legendary event that attracts the attention of others. Thus, when this person proposes a story, the audience knows what to expect. Culturally, the teller and the audience share a common knowledge of legendry, and the story brought up is based on a shared frame of reference whereby the telling becomes conversational. The proponent who starts a story will be joined by co-proponents who add their information to the telling as the story unfolds. Those present contribute to a communal version, adding their information, making corrections, and expressing their opinions concerning the veracity of the event. Because the legend by its very nature provokes debate, questioning the nature of human destiny, its telling is not limited to the story proper.

The construction of a narrative begins informally, in conversation when someone brings up a peculiar experience of common interest. Then, the best-informed member of the group begins by setting the frame. The event is described by presenting evidence: Those involved are named; eyewitnesses are mentioned; and the place, the time, and the environmental conditions are—often meticulously—stated. After amplifications, the teller comes to the point and presents the story that happened to him or her or to someone else—a reliable, respected person, an acquaintance of a trustworthy person, or someone more distant, such as “a friend of a friend.” The core narrative is accompanied by comments expressing the ambiguous feelings of the participants about its veracity: for example, “I am not

sure if this is true or not, but . . .”; “I’ve seen it with my own eyes”; “This is all baloney, but some people would swear . . .”; or “My grandfather is an honest man, and he never told a lie.” At the conclusion of the performance, as at the beginning, the question is raised again: Could this be true or not? Throughout the narrative process, the legend manifests conflicting opinions expressed in contradictions, additions, approvals, and disapprovals. As a conversation about the truth of the presented case, the legend is a discussion between believers, doubters, skeptics, and nonbelievers. It is this discussion of the feasibility of the narrated legend that is essential, not its resolution or the settling of the dispute. It is also inconsequential whether the tellers are believers or nonbelievers; what counts is that they are attracted to the universal questions of the world and human life entertained by the legend and that they like to express their attitudes toward it. The text of the legend is generated by the power of its inherent dialectics.

The legend is not limited to oral existence in face-to-face communication within small groups. Throughout the history of Western civilization, legends have abounded in written sources. Chronicles, annals, local and national histories, tractates (medical, natural historical, legal, and ecclesiastical), travelogues, diaries, and literary works inform us of the wealth of an essentially homogeneous body of legendry that has persisted in both oral and literary tradition to the present time. For example, the late fifteenth-century witch hunt manual *Malleus Maleficarum* (The witch hammer), written by two Dominican priests, contains the same witch and devil legends that are commonly known today, as does *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, written about a century later by Reginald Scot in Elizabethan England. Legend transmission from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries by Swiss legend collectors who were also writers and retellers of their texts is well documented in the collection of Rudolf Schenda.

The Industrial Revolution multiplied the communication channels that accommodated legend transmission, among other cultural messages. It sped up the circulation of legends while reaching out far beyond the small group, creating a global village that unified and homogenized mass society. The multivocal mass media today have a more potent influence on legend dissemination than does ongoing oral tradition in isolated small groups. Now, individuals communicate their legends through the telephone, tape recorder, videotape, e-mail, fax, or photocopier. On a broader scale, beyond the unofficial confines, legend events are further relayed to society at large by professional mediators who, like oral narrators, modify and re-create their versions to fit their purposes. Emergent legends are immediately reported in the daily news and the popular press, radio, and television; they are topics of talk shows, docudramas, and motion pictures; and they appear in popular science and literary works. The media also reconstruct and update old legends attached to current social concerns, keeping the public attracted and simultaneously confused about what to believe or what to doubt.

Grace O'Malley

Grace O'Malley, the anglicized name for Gaelic *Gra'inne Ni' Mha'ille* or *Granuiale*, was born around 1530 and died around 1600. Historically she was a pirate and sometimes successful marital opportunist who amassed considerable property and wealth. She was said to be "the nurse of all rebellions in the province" (of Connaught). In folklore she is a swashbuckling defier of Spaniards, oppressors, and anyone else who gets in her way. Her exploits are told and retold in tales that have made her name synonymous with the Irish nation itself.

In *Legends from Ireland*, Sean O'Sullivan relates two stories that convey the fearsome nature of the legendary Grace O'Malley. In the first story, Grace O'Malley's son is abducted by the Flaherties and imprisoned in their castle at Renvyle. Grace sails into Renvyle harbor, gives birth to a baby, and on the same day sallies forth against the Flaherties in their stronghold, threatening them with dire consequences if they do not free her son. So frightened are the Flaherties that they release the son, though in her anger, Grace still has her cannon do some damage to their castle.

The second story involves Grace O'Malley's brother, the Red-Haired Smith. Grace thinks he is an even finer man than her husband, Burke. Burke is jealous and tells Grace he will prove his superiority when the Red-Haired Smith next comes to visit. Over dinner, Burke tells the Red-Haired Smith that Grace thinks he is the better man, an opinion that, Burke says, he finds insulting. A fight ensues in which the Red-Haired Smith is killed. Burke then beheads the body and carries the head to Grace, inviting her to cry all she wishes. Instead, Grace takes hold of her own rapier, goes into the garden where her two teenage sons are playing, and cuts off their heads. She carries these to her husband saying, "Tis your turn to cry now! . . . While you weep for your two sons, I'll weep for my brother, the Red-Haired Smith."

Grace O'Malley's seagoing exploits, factual and fictional, also make her a celebrated figure in sailor lore.

Graham Seal

On the wings of mass media, the proliferation of the legend is unprecedented; it has become the most viable among the genres of folklore and the most characteristic expression of human concerns in the industrial world.

Originally, following Grimmian principles, three kinds of folk legends were identified: *historical*, those related to an event or a personality of historical significance; *mythological* (demonological), those concerning human encounters with the supernatural world and endowment with supernatural power and knowledge; and *etiological* (explanatory), about the nature and origins of animate and inanimate things. In practice, this classification proved to be too limited because legends may be as much historical as mythological and explanatory at the same time, but when the system was developed, it satisfied needs for indexing archival materials, particularly the detailed scheme elaborated by the Legend-Commission

of the International Society for Folk-Narrative Research in 1963. C. W. von Sydow, however, proposed a formal developmental distinction between a simpler form of legend, the *memorate* (telling one's own personal experience), and the more polished *fabulate* (based on personal experience but transformed by the creative process of oral transmission). Another common distinction of legends is made on the basis of their dissemination: The *local legend* is attached to a certain locus (a historical, geographical environment), whereas the *migratory legend* is a more crystallized, widespread, and fictionalized form. Many subcategories of the legend have been proposed over time on the basis of diverse classificatory principles, but because of the structural inconsistency of the legend, a formal model or prototype has never been established. The same story can be indicated, cited, or explicitly told in any form, from a sentence to a long elaborate story, depending on the skill of the teller and the degree of information held by the bearers. Legends can also be "told" without speaking—signaled by body language, gesture, sound and pictorial imitation, mumming, and ostension, that is, actually doing events described in legend. Any particle of a legend may be regarded as a legend because the part stands for the whole as it is received by its audience. In minimal speech utterance, legend can be hinted at or alluded to, or it can appear as the report of a fact, a belief, an opinion, or a vision claimed as the teller's experience by using the first-person singular voice. Legend may appear as rumor, repeated in chain transmission and expanded into a more or less detailed, multiepisodic story or, indeed, into a whole cycle of connected stories, finding its proper conduit.

The core of the legend is actually a belief that is interpreted positively or negatively during the legend-telling process but that need not be stated or explained because its underlying idea is shared by the support community. (Only the visiting field-worker needs to hear unspecific statements of the obvious, such as: "Witches steal the milk of cows by drawing a bedsheet over the pasture on the eve of Saint George.") If harm does occur, the belief will manifest in two forms: (1) in a magical act of healing and retaliation, and (2) in telling about it. To act means to perform a custom or a ritual; telling is the formulation of the legend about the act. The proportion of the two (the description of the physical procedures and the narration of the story about it) varies greatly in diverse kinds of legends.

Legends accompany people through life. In a continuum, each life stage develops its own legendry: Natural and permanent groups (based on kinship, age, gender, or ethnicity) and voluntary and occasional groups (social, religious, occupational, or recreational) constitute a network of social interactions in which legends are communicated. Legend ingredients are rooted in the earliest experiences of childhood. Building on images of fear, introduced in the course of normal mental development, adults gradually expose children to both supernatural and real horrors. Parents and other influential adults, older siblings, and the mass media furnish scary stories generally believed to be entertaining and educational. The stories for

children between ages two and fourteen are about ghosts, witches, monsters, devils, werewolves, mad murderers, and cataclysmic disasters—rich in images and characters but weak in narrative construction. These images include all manner of slimy, pukey, bloody, putrefied, rotten, and disgusting horrors.

Adolescents and young adults are the largest consumers of “horror art,” or legends provided by movies, comics, Halloween spook houses, and daring initiation rituals into adulthood for both sexes. These legends are complex events combining ritual and narration. Young people (the legend-telling group) visit scary places (haunted by the dead who perished there, prowled by disfigured and crazy killers, or consecrated as human sacrifice sites by devil worshipers, for example) and expose themselves to danger. They simulate reenactment of the event and retell a legend of their participant involvement—a narrow escape. These quest stories are all localized supernatural and extranormal horrors showing great variability, informed by the popular press’s sensationalized national and international coverage of occult, lunatic, and criminal acts.

The legends of adults are much more diffuse and varied. Basically, the stock contains family tradition: inherited legendry about locally famous and infamous people, haunts, violence, predictions that have come true, miraculous healings, and curses taking effect. As mentioned, the stock also contains childhood memories of youth legendry. The rest, the larger contingent, occupies the space between science and religion and is distributed according to free choice among the adults’ underlying systems of belief. Since the late nineteenth century, Western society has institutionalized its factions that try to explain unknown mysteries of life, death, and the hereafter both by rationalized interpretation of the irrational and by cultic-religious mystification, opening the way for a never-anticipated legend explosion. Legends emerged as charters of establishment in support of Spiritism and Fundamentalism, of charismatic, mystic sects, and of Christian and Eastern religions, as well as Satanism, Wicca, and Paganism, and the so-called occult sciences (parapsychology, astrology, study of extrasensory perception, psychic forces, clairvoyance, the study of unidentified flying objects [UFO] phenomena) and have contributed greatly to the scientification of folk belief and elements of legendry. Through the intervention of the ever-present mass media, this legendry has become common knowledge in modern technological society. Mass media also have become the source of a special type of horror legend that spreads as rumor related to emergent accusations, such as willful food contamination (by big companies or foreign restaurants), affliction of mortal diseases (AIDS, leprosy), ritual child abuse and cannibalism (blood sucking for empowerment), and kidnapping of children (to harvest their organs as transplant merchandise), to name only a few of the themes.

In view of the unprecedented proliferation of legends in our time, folklore scholars have begun to raise questions concerning the increase of irrationality in

technologically advanced Western society. In the late 1960s, American folklorists began to recognize some specific and previously unknown features of modern legends, and subsequently, British researchers joined the American team for collaborative work. Collecting and analyzing new materials resulted in new approaches and hypotheses. Efforts were made to identify and describe a new type of *urban* or *contemporary legend*, and questions were raised about whether it differed from the traditional folk legend known to scholars. By the end of the 1980s, the diagnosis of the widespread presence of an urban or contemporary body of new legendry also was verified by continental European folklorists from Sweden, Norway, Finland, Germany, Switzerland, France, Croatia, Belgium, Holland, and Poland. The content of this legend type, emergent from the social problems of the urban folk, is more concerned with the rationally horrible than with the irrationally supernatural; its form is less cohesive and also ephemeral, like whispered-around gossip or rumor.

Although collectors have broadened the category of urban or contemporary legend by including all kinds of anecdotal and pun-like messages that might become legends, they have tended to concede that urban legends cannot be separated from traditional legendry. Contextualization of traditional themes within the urban-industrial environment means only that legend messages keep their importance for modern people. The traditional scene—the barn, pasture, stable, woods, lonely trail—has given way to new familiar scenes—the parking lot, the shopping center, the day care center—but this does not change the essential meaning of the legend; rather, it reinforces it. The restless dead now send messages through TV screens and e-mail; divine apparitions float on apartment houses and office picture windows; witches, monsters, and maniacal killers endanger the safety of women or dating couples driving on the highway or parked in lovers' lanes; and fast food restaurants serve dangerous substances in the most popular dishes and drinks. To survive, legends must be relevant, dealing with contemporary problems, as they always have.

Linda Dégh

See Also Belief Tale; Conduit Theory/Multiconduit Theory; Legend, Contemporary; Legend, Urban; Robin Hood.

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Legend, Contemporary

A short traditional narrative, or digest of a narrative, that has no definitive text, formulaic openings and closings, or artistically developed form; alternatively described as modern, urban, or belief legends, folktales, or myths. The preceding features of the contemporary legend often prevent its traditional nature from being immediately apparent. When communicated orally, contemporary legends exist primarily in an informal conversational form, although they also are embedded in other types of discourse (e.g., the joke, memorate, rumor, or personal experience narrative) and in diverse settings—ranging from news reports to after-dinner speeches. Frequently, they also are disseminated through the mass media, novels, and short stories, or by e-mail, fax, and photocopier, and therefore have a wide international circulation.

Contemporary legends are primarily nonsupernatural, secular narratives that are set in the real world. Told as if they happened recently, they focus on ordinary individuals in familiar places, and they portray situations that are perceived as important by the narrators and listeners alike—situations that the performers and their audiences may have experienced, are currently experiencing, or could possibly experience. As such, they describe plausible, ordinary situations and events,

although often with an unusual twist. This mundaneness gives contemporary legends a unique quality that sets them apart from legends *per se*. Contemporary legends emerge out of social contexts and interactions, and they comment on culturally proscribed behavior. The list of topics covered includes such diverse themes as murder and violence, contaminated food, revenge, warnings, accidents, pleasant surprises, practical jokes, embarrassing situations, suppressed enterprise, cons, out-of-luck stories, devil worship, and mistrust of modern technology, such as microwaves and computers. Some contemporary legends suggest or even call for action on the part of the listeners—as in the case of the tale (existing in various forms) that asks people to send postcards to a dying child who wants to get into the Guinness Book of Records.

Although contemporary legends may have historical antecedents, either real or referential, they are not simply traditional legends in circulation today or updated narratives that describe contemporary characters or settings. Instead, their contemporary status is derived from the opportunity they provide for the narrator to introduce some statement of belief about a contemporary issue, out of which arises dialogue and debate.

Contemporary legends, in general, are told as describing true events, even when presented as lies, hoaxes, or jokes. Regardless, a contemporary legend may, in whole or part, be true—not necessarily literally true but containing a truth that comes from typifying life in the current century. These narratives emerge out of the existing beliefs of a given group and, as such, do not require that the narrators and listeners subscribe to any special belief(s).

Contemporary legends require no specialist performers, so no distinction exists between narrators and listeners. Usually, the narrators are unaware that they are telling traditional narratives that have previously been told by many others. And contemporary legends are normally offered in response to a preceding item of conversation, rather than to a request for “someone to tell a tale.”

Contemporary legends have no single meaning; indeed, they have different meanings for different individuals and in different contexts. There is also a wide variety of functions for both the telling of contemporary legends and their narrative contents. Any one narrative may be informative and/or entertaining and/or carrying other messages at the same time. They can be didactic or used to present a rational explanation of some issue or phenomenon that is ambiguous or beyond our control. They are used to fill gaps in our empirical knowledge with suppositions about the way the world works. They have been used to validate our thoughts, beliefs, and actions; to provide a forum for social control; to deliver moral messages; and to justify why we behave in particular ways in certain situations. As such, they allow us to express our fears, provide commentary and explanations of abnormal situations or strange behavior, or warn against involvement in particular types of situations. Contemporary legends also may function

to reinforce nonestablishment values and to disseminate and reinforce existing attitudes—by stereotyping people, beliefs, and attitudes. Thus, we use contemporary legends as a way of maintaining the status quo within our social groups.

Research on this topic has been undertaken by scholars in such divergent disciplines as anthropology, history, business management, sociology, psychology, communication studies, English language, English literature, and Native American studies. Therefore, the study of contemporary legend is not solely the territory of folklorists—despite a tendency for them to dominate the field.

In 1982, the first annual “Perspectives on Contemporary Legend International Seminar” was held at the Centre for English Cultural Tradition and Language at the University of Sheffield, England. This and subsequent seminars produced five volumes of conference proceedings. A growing interest in the topic led to the foundation in 1988 of the International Society for Contemporary Legend Research, which publishes the newsletter *FOAFtale News* and the journal *Contemporary Legend*.

Paul Smith

See Also Legend; Legend, Urban.

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Legend, Urban

A popular term for a narrative concerning some aspect of modern life that is believed by its teller but is actually untrue. The concept has its origins in the debate over whether folklore was characteristic of rural cultures or if it extended to educated classes as well. French folklorists in the 1880s first showed interest in a distinctively “urban” legend parallel to the “traditional” (i.e., supernatural) legend. Under the leadership of Paul Sébillot, scholars published a large number of actively circulating rumors and narratives collected in Paris, Danzig, and other urban areas. Their lead, however, was not communicated to their counterparts in the Finnish-German and Anglo-American scholarly traditions, who continued to overemphasize legends that appeared to reflect survivals of “primitive” rural belief systems.

Interest in city-based legends appeared only sporadically in American publications until the 1950s, when Richard M. Dorson highlighted them as examples of “modern” folklore. He called attention to several common legends of this type, including “The Death Car,” in his influential 1959 textbook *American Folklore*. Subsequently, a number of studies and collections of similar legends were published by his colleagues and students at Indiana University. Initially, Dorson called such narratives “city legends,” but he later used several different terms for them, including “urban belief tales,” “modern legends,” and (at least by 1968) “urban legends.”

The related concept, “urban myth,” was coined by the American social anthropologist William H. Friedland in a paper presented at a 1960 meeting of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute for Social Research in Lusaka, Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). A group of European social scientists, led by Max Gluckman (later a leading sociologist at the University of Manchester), met to discuss “Myths in Modern Africa.” The conference focused on the effect of “detrribalization” [i.e., the influence of Western-style urbanism] on the culture of previously rural Africans. The key term *myth* was then understood as an account of events that was represented as factual but could be proven to be fictional or at least a serious misrepresentation of what had actually happened. Nevertheless, speakers agreed, myths reflected social realities and could either support or challenge the political status quo.

Friedland’s paper, “Some Urban Myths of East Africa,” identified the alleged “friend of a friend” authority as one of the hallmarks of the narrative type. His examples include several since collected and characterized as “urban legends,” notably the claim that Europeans kidnapped native Africans to use their body parts for medical purposes. However, he differed with other researchers in arguing that an “urban myth” was not necessarily fictitious but a set of ideas that satisfied a social need and could be used as a basis for political action. This sense of the term became a useful one in the conference’s discussion, and it, with the synonymous “modern myth,” became the dominant name among European scholars for beliefs or rumors with controversial political implications that spread quickly.

The term *urban legend* was given wide exposure in 1981 when Jan Harold Brunvand summed up folkloristic research on such narratives in *The Vanishing Hitchhiker*. Brunvand, like Monica Wilson, characterized urban legends as literally false—that is, they could not have happened in the precise way in which the narrative stated. “A story too good to be true” later became his nutshell definition of the genre. But urban legends were, he added, metaphorically true, in that they revealed concerns about modern society and often contained explicit or symbolic criticisms of urban conditions. His book was widely read, and through its sequels and a weekly news column, Brunvand’s approach to such narratives became familiar to many nonfolklorists. *Urban legend*, like “urban myth,” soon became understood as an *erroneous belief* among the general public and has been applied to a wide range of material, from non-narrative beliefs (sadists put razor blades in apples) to “unbelievable” personal experience stories (satanic cult or UFO abduction accounts).

Brunvand’s approach has been criticized by some folklorists, who find that his stress on the fallacy of legends demeans their performers. Others argue that his use of summary or media versions to extract broad cultural meanings was often impressionistic and superficial. Scattered but persistent records of analogs in traditional rural contexts also suggest that the “urban” context of modern variants may be an artifact of changes in fieldwork methodology: Supernatural legends may have been overcollected in the past. Further, popular use of the term *urban legend* to refer to any narrative that appears to reflect an “urban” or “modern” context often groups narratives of disparate content and reflects different modes of narration. Some seem close to jokes or tales in performance; others, like UFO abduction accounts, are narrated as personal experiences. Finally, the effort to distinguish *legends* from other forms of rumor or collective belief has been problematized by recent sociologists like Dan E. Miller since a distinction cannot be supported by empirical observation of communities, in which such information is passed on and discussed in a dynamic, collaborative process. Considering legends as “believed but untrue” stories ignores important differences in their social contexts and dynamics. Hence, many folklorists prefer to use the term *contemporary legend*, a more neutral but equally vague and problematic concept.

Daniel R. Barnes, however, has argued that the term is accurate in referring to one subset of legends. These, like “The Vanishing Hitchhiker,” are formally similar in that they deliberately withhold an important clue from the audience (the fact that the hitchhiker is actually a ghost) until the “punch line” at the end of the narrative. Such a narrative device, he argues, is similar to those used in popular literature forms such as the detective story, whose growth in popularity parallels urbanization.

Interest in urban legend studies has created an international network of amateur and professional collectors, who have brought a diverse and challenging

base of data to academics' attention. Analysis of these data may well lead to a more precise definition of the legend and related concepts.

Bill Ellis

See Also Legend; Legend, Contemporary; Myth.

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Life-Cycle Ritual

A complex of ritual patterns accompanying critical moments of the human life cycle, from pregnancy and childbirth to death. Life-cycle rituals accompany status transformations of a community, society, or other group of individuals. They constitute a part of the socialization process of an individual into the community. These rituals transform because they confirm or change the participants' status or position within a community. Each community shares a common view of the maturation and socialization processes of an individual, and life-cycle rituals mark these stages for the individual and the respective social group.

The patterns of traditional rituals are governed by the particular community's own values. Rituals respond to these values in that new situations change ritual contexts and interpretations. Changed circumstances, in fact, may lead the group to create new forms of ritual actions in relation to the human life cycle. Despite

unique cultural structures, human life-cycle rituals appear to be almost universally patterned around the birth, puberty or marriage, and death of an individual.

Birth can be characterized as a transition that is significant from both the mother's and the newborn's points of view. And rituals connected with pregnancy, birth, and maternity mark the social relations of both the mother and the infant. Most important for the baby are the confirmation of its admission to membership in the community and the creation of its first status. For the mother, birth marks a transformation from the everyday role of a wife to the specific role of a mother. The ability of a human to reproduce on the individual level and the permitted social conditions for such reproduction are the central topics of a range of life-cycle rituals.

For instance, a wedding ceremony announces that a significant change of status occurs as the maiden assumes the role of wife and the young man becomes a husband. In most societies, a wedding is a complex of rites of passage in which many other complicated social relationships of the community are rearranged and made public. A wedding consists of numerous discrete events. There are, however, only a few ritual movements that actually constitute the decisive act of transforming status. For example, requesting permission to marry makes public the statuses of the suitor and wooed girl, handshaking means engagement, official registration is needed to make the couple legally wife and husband, and the first child is needed for the formation of a new nuclear family.

Death rituals also are a complex of linked events. These may include such stages as the death watch and expiration, the washing and dressing of the body, the making of the coffin, and the digging of the grave—a chain of funeral rites at home and a complex of burial rites. Often, there are additional special rites for the post-burial period associated with “remembering” the deceased.

Life-cycle rituals, therefore, accompany the crucial changes in social status. These rituals confirm the continuity and structure of social life for both the individual and the community.

Juha Pentikäinen

See Also Festival.

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Life History

A research method that focuses on the individual's life experiences, particularly significant events; also known as the life-historical approach. A great variety of terms pertain to this mode of study. The concept of autobiography refers to an account produced by the individual about his or her own life. A biography, in contrast, is an account produced by someone other than the person studied, sometimes without the active involvement of the individual under scrutiny (e.g., studies of the founders of religions, historical figures, or the deceased). The term life history is used to denote the study of an individual's life that results from the interaction between the informant and the researcher.

The culture and personality school within cultural anthropology specializes in problems associated with the interaction between the personality of an individual and the individual's culture. The biographical or life history method springs from the same theoretical origins as the culture and personality school and is based on personal accounts or other reliable sources that shed light on the major events of the subject's life. This method investigates the relations of a community and its individual members through intensive study of one particular representative of the culture. The personality is considered not as a permanent entity but rather as an organism that goes through various changes in the course of different phases of a unique life history. This type of research is often referred to as a holistic in-depth study, which accounts for both the individual's experiences and the interpretation of these events. The chain of personal events and their interpretation as the structure of a life history illuminate the complex interplay between the individual, society, and culture. The life-historical approach is, by its very nature, a retrospective and very much an interpretative task for both the individual and the researcher when a living person is studied. Indeed, it is interactional to such an extent that the scholar becomes an integral part of the research.

Life-historical (repertoire) analysis sheds light on the way one experiences the environment in one's own niche and how one's own life experiences and worldview interact in someone's life history and folklore repertoire. It is also relevant to focus attention on the influence of the crucial turning points or situations of choice upon the individual's social, status, or role personality, which implies a micro study of problems significant on the macro level.

An interesting research problem in biographical studies either of an individual or of a small group is the relationship between an individual and the community in which the person is brought up. When studying the ethnic, social, and cultural

identities of an individual on the basis of life-historical materials, it is meaningful to relate identity to the significant processes of social and individual changes that demand reorientation of both the self and the world. Because neither individuals nor social groups nor situations are static, this reconstruction is a continuous process.

In their life histories, people tell about themselves—that is, how they have experienced life, society, culture, and environment. At the same time, they transmit ideas and meanings that include elements of their worldviews. Thus, life histories and worldviews contain similar elements and often deal with the same basic unit of research, an idiosyncratic individual. Life history and worldview, as concepts of research, are not, however, overlapping, although the life-historical method and worldview analysis often coincide since both are in-depth studies requiring extensive fieldwork. In fact, there is no clear borderline between fieldwork and analysis in the course of an in-depth study. It is often necessary to change and modify the plan in the course of long-term fieldwork. Interviews and observations in the field have to do with interactional situations within which the individual who is revealing the personal life history is focusing simultaneously on the current interaction, past experiences, and their significance to the present.

Such (auto)biographical genres as memorates, legends, and laments are of great value as sources of life-historical documents.

Juha Pentikäinen

See Also Historical Analysis; Legend; Memorate; Personal Experience Narrative.

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Liminality

A special state in a transition ritual. The term *liminality*, derived from the Latin *limen* (meaning threshold), identifies the condition opposing the normal, hierarchical, structured state or the fixed point in the social structure both on the

individual and on the societal level, particularly when this state arises in the course of transformative rituals. This marginal period is an interstructural situation opposing a relatively fixed or stable condition.

Ritual subjects—individuals—can be termed “transitional beings” or “liminal personae” during the period of liminality. During the marginal period in the process of rites of passage, ritual subjects are in a somehow undefined, ambiguous status. This liminal phase exists between the act of separation from the participants’ old status and the neophytes’ induction into a new one. The threefold model of the nature of rites of passage was put forward by Arnold van Gennep in his *Rites of Passage*, published in 1909.

Victor W. Turner has further developed van Gennep’s concept of liminal rites. Turner’s process-oriented method focuses on the structural analysis of rites and symbols. In his terminology, the concept of structure coincides with social structure as employed in British social anthropology. The concepts of antistructure and *communitas* are both used in the description of the liminal stage. In Turner’s opinion, during the liminal stage, *communitas* tends to characterize relationships between those jointly undergoing ritual transformation. The bonds of *communitas* are antistructural in the sense that they are undifferentiated, egalitarian, direct, extant, non-rational, existential, I-thou relationships. *Communitas* is spontaneous, immediate, concrete; it is not shaped by norms, not institutionalized, and not abstract.

Within the liminal stage, participants (e.g., initiands) are beyond the boundaries of the normal social structure and its values, norms, and obligations. The marginal state that begins with rites of separation is an abnormal condition, beyond society and time. For that reason, it is possible for people to behave in ways that do not coincide with those of the “normal” social structure and its conditions. For instance, sexual freedom is a common characteristic of the marginal period in the initiation rites of many peoples. The marginal abnormal condition of anarchy is terminated by rites of aggregation, which make new status relationships public to the community.

The abnormal and antistructural liminal stage deviates from the norm to such an extent that, depending on the culture and religion, people at that phase are considered to be more susceptible to the influence of the supernatural than usual. For example, the frequency of supranormal experiences is quite high during or around liminal periods among people going through rites of passages. Thus, the presence of the supernatural is a common characteristic of the liminal phase. Supernatural experiences are even expected, and the manifestations of supranormal beings are believed to have a positive effect on the community. It is important from the point of view of any community for the liminal stage to be safely passed over and for life to return to normal.

Liminality also can become a continuous problem that disturbs the life of the community. An example of such turmoil arising from unresolved liminality can

be found in religious beliefs dealing with the so-called dead without status. The problem of the dead without status (e.g., unbaptized babies) seems to be their eternal liminality. Such “betwixt and between” status is an exceptional, unsatisfactory condition primarily inflicted on those who are regarded as responsible for the supranormal manifestations.

Turner makes a distinction between the terms *liminal* and *liminoid*, emphasizing the need for a proper terminology to describe ritual life even in industrialized and highly developed cultures. Turner claims that in such societies, the liminoid is not only removed from the rite of passage context but also “individualized.” A solitary artist creates liminoid phenomena, a group experiences collective liminal symbols.

Studies on threshold experiences and the liminal stage also might lead to a better understanding of creativity. Individuals who are distinguished for their creativity seem to enjoy an anarchic way of life and put a great emphasis on marginal experiences, which seem to be a necessary catalyst for their creativity.

Juha Pentikäinen

See Also Anthropology, Symbolic.

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Linguistic Approach

The transferal of methods from the study of language to the study of folklore. In many respects, folklore and language are similar, and their commonalities have led to productive exchanges between the disciplines created to account for them. In both folklore and linguistics, researchers examine complex creations that unite and at the same time distinguish their users. Both language and folklore convey meaning that, shared within a community, endures over time but that nonetheless

always varies in response to performer, audience, and context. Both are shaped by the experiences and ways of life of their users, and in turn, they help shape their ambient cultures and communities.

Linguistics played an important role in the formation of folklore studies. Language was one of the central interests of romanticism, the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century intellectual movement that gave rise to the field itself, and many of the leaders of folklore studies have maintained professional identities as linguists as well. Linguistic concepts and methods have been adapted to the myriad cultural forms that folklorists investigate, and they are reflected particularly in historical and geographic approaches, the study of worldview, the work of the Prague school and structuralists, the ethnography of communication, and ethnopoeitics.

History, Geography, and Origins

Nineteenth-century scholarship in both folklore and linguistics focused on the history, geographic spread, and ultimate origins of cultural phenomena. Early linguists (philologists) in Europe became engrossed in the reconstruction of prior forms of language through the careful comparison of existing forms. This comparative method eventually revealed the underlying genetic relations between the majority of Europe's languages and represented a powerful methodology for the recovery of prehistory. Jacob Grimm extended the method to folklore, seeking to reconstruct ancient Germanic mythology from extant beliefs and words, and the Finnish scholars Julius and Kaarle Krohn applied the comparative framework to folksong and folk narrative. The historic-geographic ("Finnish") method adopted the concepts and terminology of comparative linguistics freely, coining the term *Ur-form* to parallel linguistic reconstructions such as *Ur-germanisch* (proto-Germanic).

A key common interest for both folklorists and linguists in Europe was folk speech, the nonstandard forms of language used outside of elite circles. In folk speech, both groups of scholars sought clues for the reconstruction of folk history. Folk speech was seen as a key to understanding the movements and relations that lay behind the settlement of particular regions or countries. This interest was transferred to the American context as well, where the study of dialect built upon a long-standing literary interest in folk speech. The study of temporal and spatial variation in speech patterns developed into the linguistic subdisciplines of dialectology and language geography but have continued to attract folkloristic attention as well. Important syntheses of work in this area include the *Dictionary of American Regional English* and the European *Atlas Linguarum Europae*. Both dictionaries examine the historical spread and distribution of lexical items and pronunciations across vast geographic areas. The line between language geography and folkloristics becomes very unclear, especially when considering folk terminology for traditional implements or concepts (the "*Wort und Sache*," or "word and thing," approach of European ethnology).

Salvage and Classification

One of the greatest challenges facing folklorists and linguists alike in the early stages of their disciplines was the collection and classification of data. In both Europe and the United States, the specters of industrialization and modernity threatened to sweep away the ancient speech and pastimes of the peasantry before scholars could record or study them. In North America, this threat proved even more ominous as indigenous languages and traditions were pushed to oblivion by white expansion. The Bureau of American Ethnology (founded in 1879) and Franz Boas, editor of the *Journal of American Folklore* from 1908 to 1924, led the way in the recording of Native American language and narrative. And folklorist/linguists such as Boas, Alfred Kroeber, and Edward Sapir gained understandings during their fieldwork among Native American populations that profoundly shaped the field of folklore and continue to influence theoretical developments in the field today.

One of the most fundamental tenets in “ethnolinguistic fieldwork” among Native Americans was the verbatim transcription of speech. Earlier folklorists saw no need to leave collected narratives “unimproved” and often edited or reworked their informants’ words, even when claiming to provide exact transcriptions. Linguistic fieldworkers dealing with exotic languages, by contrast, demanded absolute fidelity to the text as performed: Only then could the transcription become useful in studying the grammar of the language in question. Boas and his students favored the collection of myth and other forms of traditional narrative as examples of connected discourse. In addition, such transcriptions could help researchers investigate the history, values, and aesthetics of a people. For Boas and the “anthropological folklorists,” both linguistics and folklore studies were essential sub-disciplines of anthropology, the integrated study of humanity.

Worldview

Ethnolinguistic studies of Native American idioms expanded the range of notions concerning language and its form and helped dismantle the Eurocentric tenets of linguistic theory. Crucial to the development of folkloristics, however, was the concurrent realization of linguistic relativism. Writing in the first half of the twentieth century, linguists Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf posited that language shapes and largely determines our understandings of the world. Rather than viewing language as an objective expression of reality, the “Sapir-Whorf hypothesis” portrays language as a subjective expression of an imagined reality, one that will vary from culture to culture. One’s very thoughts—or at least the forms of those thoughts—are shaped by one’s native language. Language thus becomes central to any investigation of culture and serves as the foundation for worldview. This realization remains productive in the fields of folklore, linguistics, and anthropology today, and it has enjoyed a resurgence through scholars’ interest in folk taxonomies, such as those studied by Gary Gossen in Chamula culture. By attending

to the systems by which the world is classified within a given language, the scholar can make judgments about the worldview and values of the people studied. Perhaps no other area of folkloristic research seeks to make such minute and yet all-encompassing judgments about human thought as this branch of folkloric/linguistic inquiry.

The Prague School

More than other linguists working in the Boasian tradition, Sapir advocated the study of language in natural contexts. Such work was eventually made possible by the development of recording technology and the shift from dictation to sound recording as a method of data collection. An innovative theoretical base for the study of language in the here and now was offered at the same time by the Prague school linguists of Europe. Researchers in this tradition shifted attention from the historical development of language to its synchronic aspects (i.e., how language is used at the moment of performance), emphasizing its functional, structural, contextual, and aesthetic features. The work of such Prague school linguists as Roman Jakobson and Petr Bogatyrev served as the basis for the formation of the ethnography of communication approach years later, and Jakobson's explorations of poetics remain important in folkloristic studies of aesthetics and ethnopoetics (see the related discussion that follows).

Saussure and Chomsky

Another influential European linguist of the early twentieth century was Ferdinand de Saussure, who distinguished between the *parole* (the speech act in its natural context) and the *langue* (the abstract system of rules underlying natural speech). Saussure's work spurred new interest in language structure and its relation to meaning, an interest that developed into the independent field of semiotics (the structural study of signs). Folklorists, too, joined in this expanded descriptive enterprise, applying structuralist and semiotic approaches to genres such as *Märchen*, riddle, and proverb. Figures such as Elli Köngäs-Maranda and Thomas Sebeok brought folklore genres into the center of linguistic and semiotic inquiry. Later developments, especially in speech-act theory, further extended this logic-based descriptive tradition. The works of John McDowell, W. J. Pepicello, and Thomas A. Green illustrate the ways in which this expanded framework can be applied to folklore (specifically, the riddle).

In certain ways, the Saussurean paradigm, especially as adapted by Noam Chomsky in the 1960s and 1970s, led to a retreat from the earlier focuses of linguistics—namely, historical and ethnographic research. Information on the actual performance of language in context became trivialized as expendable data. Descriptive endeavors were oriented toward discovering the system of rules underlying natural



Noam Chomsky (1928–) is an American linguist, MIT professor, and a leading political dissident. (AP/Wide World Photos)

language rather than the analysis of language in use. Nonetheless, even Chomskian linguistics proved an important model for folklorists, particularly in the study of material culture, where Henry Glassie's adaptation of generative grammar theory to vernacular architecture touched off a major research trend.

Language in Context

In the 1960s and 1970s, the interests of a number of folklorists and linguists again converged, contributing to the inception of the performance school of folklore studies and the further development of sociolinguistics. Researchers such as Dell Hymes, Richard Bauman, John Gumperz, Joel Sherzer, and others focused attention on language function in context, particularly with reference to the speech community. Indeed, the speech community—the union of persons sharing a given form of speech in a given place at a given moment—became a key means of defining one's ethnographic object. Language becomes one of the resources available to the community for the accomplishment of communication. Speech acts can be analyzed to discover the ways of speaking that are permissible in a given community and the intricacies of discourse as it occurs naturally. Just as a speaker in Chomskian linguistics could be assumed to possess a basic competence in the abstract *langue*, so a speaker in this performance-oriented linguistics could be assumed to possess “communicative competence,” that is, the ability to use or

interpret language appropriately in its everyday *paroles*. Careful description of speech function in interaction became known as discourse analysis, and the performative and ethnographic aspects of speech communities were studied under the cluster of rubrics “ethnography of speaking,” “ethnography of communication,” and “ways of speaking.”

This shift of attention from the study of language in the abstract or on the level of a society as a whole toward the study of language in interaction and in specific “speech communities” altered both folklore studies and linguistics. It allowed for an emergence of the individual performer in accounts of language behavior, and it provided a theoretical basis for the interplay of performer and audience in natural contexts. Though sociolinguists have focused on minute linguistic events—tag questions, lexical choice, pronunciation, and so forth—folklorists have tended to examine larger moments—such as banter between friends, narratives within conversation, and storytelling events. In both cases, scholars reveal the complexities of everyday communication and its emergent discourse-based meanings through close analysis of performances.

The shift from language to speech community also allowed for the investigation of communities that possess or deal with more than one language. In fact, bilingualism and plurilingualism have become prime areas of research for linguists today. The intricacies of code switching and the expressive uses of one language over another in a given speech situation reflect not only the workings of human language but also the workings of human behavior in general. The notion of code switching between different cultural resources or between items in a heterogeneous cultural repertoire has become a key focus in folkloristics, particularly in the study of ethnicity.

The approach that deals with ways of speaking focuses ethnographic attention on the uses of speech in natural contexts; ethnopoeitics, by contrast, focuses on the aesthetic features of the speech itself. Important figures in this branch of folklore/linguistics include Dennis Tedlock and Dell Hymes. Hymes’s synthesis of performance school interests and structuralist linguistics represents an important contribution to contemporary folkloristic research and has helped reinvigorate the folkloristic study of Native American narrative.

Folkloristics owes many of its most effective methods and greatest achievements to the work of linguists and linguistically minded folklorists. Linguists, too, have gained much from folkloristics, particularly its interest in individuals and their relations to communities. Where the two fields intersect, the disciplinary distinction becomes merely one of emphasis. Where the two fields diverge, they offer each other new perspectives and challenges.

Thomas A. DuBois

See Also Discourse Analysis; Ethnopoeitics; Philological Approach; Semiotics; Structuralism.

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Literary Approach

A folkloristic methodology that (1) emphasizes the idealized folk as the carrier of artistic tradition and limits the scope of research to traditional forms regarded as

carrying artistic elements, or (2) views folkloristics from a humanistic, anthropological, or psychoanalytic perspective. Although the latter is now considered obsolete, scholars working from the humanistic perspective generally regarded oral tradition as a sort of inner world of thought or as an unwritten literature, those working from the anthropological perspective used the hypotheses of social science, and scholars in the psychoanalytic school worked within a psychological frame of reference. This entry focuses on the use of folklore materials in creating literary works and on one classical literary method in folkloristics—*textual criticism*.

No specific literary method has been employed in folklore scholarship during the last few decades of the twentieth century. However, some folkloristic approaches have been influenced by literary theories and have literary-based points of departure. Among the diverse literary theories and theorists that have influenced the study of folklore are: the structuralistic poetics of the Prague school (Roman Jakobson, Petr Bogatyrev); the Tartu semiotic school (Juri Lotman, Eleazar Meletinskij); the French school of structuralists (Claude Lévi-Strauss, Algirdas Julien Greimas, Roland Barthes); the poststructuralists and deconstructionists (Jacques Derrida, Julia Kristeva, Jean-François Lyotard, Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan); the French and Anglo-American schools of discourse analysis; and the diverse branches of research on narrating or “narratology.”

From the historical point of view, it is necessary to consider the processes involved in publishing and editing folklore collections, as well as diverse literary products created on the basis of such collections. This is not a literary method in folkloristics but a literary (and usually also an ideological) orientation to the process of using folklore in cultural life. In various parts of the world, folklore collections have been published in modified or reconstructed form according to prevailing literary fashions or political and didactic aims. This holds true of the European collections of tales by Giambattista Basile (1634–1636), Charles Perrault (1697), and Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm (1812–1814), as well as countless collections of epic poetry, ballads, lyric songs, proverbs, or riddles.

The creation of national epics is one facet of this phenomenon. In Finland, Elias Lönnrot collected versions of oral poetry—epics, lyrics, and incantations—and on the basis of this material, compiled the *Kalevala* in 1849. The example of Homer was important for Lönnrot but not solely as a literary model refashioned by the romantic tendencies of his time. Lönnrot also was influenced by the European research tradition of literary epics and especially by Friedrich Wolf, who, in his “Prolegomena ad Homerum” (1795), had maintained that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were composed orally in the form of short songs and edited later to obtain the unity they ultimately embodied. In the literary theories and the romantic nationalistic currents of his time, Lönnrot found a theoretical and ideological justification for his work. Thus, he believed that he knew the method—that is, how the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were created and how an epos comes into being.

Several national epics were created in nineteenth-century Europe, and each of them was formed through similar processes but with a different textual and ideological framework and background. Thus, for example, the Latvian national epos *Lācplēsis* (The bear slayer) was put to verse by Andrejs Pumpurs on the basis of various excerpts of Latvian folklore, including magic and etiological tales, legends, and folksongs. In some passages, however, the diction of the author strays very far from the folklore materials, being more “literary” than “folk” in such parts.

Every collection and publication created on a folkloric base involves various processes of ideologizing and dramatizing—and at the same time, conventionalizing. One example is Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s *Song of Hiawatha* (1855). Using a meter similar to that of the *Kalevala*, Longfellow grouped separate Native American prose legends and mythical tales around a number of central figures in order to provide a unity and a morality that the tales did not originally possess. The works of H. R. Schoolcraft were the main source of the folklore material used in *Hiawatha*, and Schoolcraft had gotten the material from English translations of Native American sources. There are, in fact, a number of similar cases throughout the world. The Russian poet Semën Lipkin, for example, has declared himself the definitive translator of *Geser, the Heroic Epos of the Buryats*, published in Russian in 1973. The text is based on Namdzil Baldano’s collation in Buryat language, and this version is at least partly founded on original epic poems. A selected portion of the text has been translated into Russian. Folklorist Aleksei Ulanov made a word-for-word translation, stating that, in the process, the traditional content, style, and poetic devices had been observed, and only side episodes hampering the integrity of the plot were removed. Lipkin finally compounded a poetic translation using regular rhyme and other poetic features unknown not only in Buryat but also in Russian epic poetry.

The practice of refashioning folklore materials for literary and ideological purposes is not a uniquely European phenomenon. In China, the term used for folklore is *mín jiān wén xué*, or “folk literature,” and one method of using folklore materials in Chinese cultural life is called *collation*: Folklore is used to propagandize when it is “collated” into normal social activities. The collation process consists of several stages of editing and compilation aimed at the publication of an artistically and ideologically suitable version. In China, the history of publishing folklore materials reaches as far back as 2,500 years, although the practice of collation in our times is not, of course, exactly the same as it was in ancient China. It is instructive to take into consideration that there are cultures in which the mutual influence of oral and literary forms has continued not for centuries but for thousands of years.

Although collections, collations, or creations fashioned by literary or ideological trends are significant as national symbols and as objects of extensive use in cultural life, they nevertheless may not qualify as primary material of folkloristic research. The same is true of the national epics, based on folklore collections. It

is, however, necessary to emphasize that the use of refashioned folklore material reveals and expresses fundamental cultural, ideological, and political processes. The research of the second life of folklore (or, as some authors call it, contextualization and textualization processes) is essential in the research of texts as a means of creating identity, power relations, and cultural authority.

Just as genuine or supposed folklore materials have provided frameworks for literary creations, literary methods have provided tools for analyzing and authenticating texts. One of the classical literary methods applied to folklore materials was *textual criticism*. This method, aimed at establishing primary and authentic texts and sources, included a careful recension and examination of different manuscripts and variants (or readings) of texts, as well as subsequent emendation and conjecture if the available evidence was inadequate. In its earliest form, this kind of procedure was applied to Homeric texts, for example, by Aristarkhos (207–145 BCE), the librarian of the Alexandrian Library; a number of scholars, especially in the nineteenth century, also applied it to biblical texts. In folkloristics, textual criticism was used mainly by adherents of the Finnish historic-geographic school, but it also was employed by literary scholars and folklorists trying to disentangle the prehistory of such classical epic texts as the Iranian epics *Shahnama* in attempts to identify Ferdousi's sources (as done by Theodore Nöldeke) or the different readings of the German *Nibelungenlied* (as done by Andreas Heusler). The text-critical histories of the classical Indian epics *Mahabharata* and *Ramajana* reveal the enormity of different languages and scripts dating from different times. It took a team of Indian scholars thirty-five years to prepare the nineteen-volume "critical edition" of *Mahabharata*. The work detected an astonishing number of interpolations, contaminations, and emendations, and in the end, the editors concluded that the compound text could not be adequately dated since the manuscripts formed a huge mosaic of old and new material—truly an intertextual network that contained elements of countless heterogeneous parts of varying ages.

In Finnish folkloristics, textual criticism was connected to an evolutionary framework in the diachronic comparative studies and to the laws of geographic distribution that emerged as the historic-geographic school during the transition to the twentieth century. On the basis of the collected texts, the adherents of this approach hoped to reconstruct the prototypes or archetypes of the texts, segregate the original and secondary features, and extrapolate the hypothetical primary form or content of the research object, deducing the place and origin of the phenomenon in question whenever possible.

Later, toward the middle of the twentieth century, the guiding principle of the "Finnish method" became the practice of arranging the text variants by typological variant groups called redactions, rather than primarily by area. According to subscribers to this procedure (e.g., Walter Anderson and Matti Kuusi), the hypothetical primary form was supposed to have generated initial redactions and

subsequently a great number of redactions and subredactions, which directly or indirectly descended from the initial forms. Ultimately, it became clear that the initial forms could hardly be revealed or reconstructed on the basis of the collected texts or variants, and the researchers had to content themselves with making more or less probable hypotheses, selecting the one that offered the most reliable answers for the moment.

During the history of applying this method to various folklore texts, one literary-based idea has been repeatedly emphasized—namely, the ideal *poeta anonymus*, the anonymous composer looming behind each epic poem or folktale. One of the tasks of the Finnish School was to uncover as much as possible from the earlier developmental phases of a particular traditional text. The Finnish scholars also sought to draw conclusions as to the time and place of the text's creation, as well as the social position, order, sex, age, and even worldview of the supposed original rune singer or muse. The paragon for this kind of procedure is seen in literary analyses aimed at revealing the authorship of ancient texts.

The question is, to what extent is this literary analog valid when dealing with folklore texts? One answer might be that after a critical examination of accessible historical sources and folklore materials, the researcher is dealing not with a literary analog but with fundamental problems of the history of the phenomenon in question. One advantage inherent in this approach is that it may serve as the basis for a hermeneutic analysis of historical perspectives, something that would not be possible (or relevant) using purely empirical methods.

Lauri Harvilahti

See Also Bard; Deconstruction; Discourse Analysis; Historic-Geographic Method; Oral-Formulaic Theory; Postmodernism; Semiotics; Structuralism.

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Little Red Riding Hood

Little Red Riding Hood is a multifaceted heroine with a checkered history. The first printed version of the story is that of Charles Perrault, published in Paris in 1697 as “Le petit chaperon rouge” (The Little Red Hat) in his *Histoires du temps passé: Avec des moralitez* (Stories of Times Past: With Morals). As the subtitle of Perrault’s work indicates, he was especially concerned to use the stories contained in his work as moral tales, warnings for the young and their adult caretakers of the dangers that lurked in the everyday world. Because of this intent, and because Perrault was very much an upper-middle-class man of his era, he rewrote the orally circulating folktales he selected for an educated, affluent, and discerning audience, excising and ameliorating certain unacceptable elements of the folk versions.

A number of scholars have shown how, and why, Perrault adapted the folk versions of the Little Red Riding Hood story in the way he did. It is now known that tales of ogres, wolves, werewolves, and other monsters threatening to devour small children were commonplaces of European medieval life and that superstitions and beliefs of this sort persisted well into the early modern period. In some parts of France there was endemic dread of walking in the woods alone, and



The wolf speaks to Little Red Riding Hood, illustrated by Maginel Wright Enright. (Tweed, Anna, ed. *Fairy Tales Everyone Should Know*, 1920)

throughout these areas in the fifteenth to the sixteenth centuries, there were innumerable persecutions and trials of individuals believed to be werewolves. Significantly, it is from these areas that many of the folk versions of the Little Red Riding Hood story have been collected by folklorists and others interested in popular traditions. It seems that Perrault, probably through family tradition, had heard some of these stories and used them as the basis for his own moralistic and literary rewrite.

What were the earlier stories like? As far as we are able to tell from oral versions collected in the nineteenth century, they did not mention a “little red riding hood” at all. The version collected by Delarue in Nièvre around 1885 is often put forward as a likely form of the tale. Known simply as “The Story of Grandmother,” the story concerns an unnamed little girl who is dispatched to her grandmother’s house with bread and milk. On the way she meets a werewolf who asks her which way she is taking—the path of needles or the path of pins. She replies that she is taking the path of needles, and the werewolf says he will take the path of pins. Along the way the little girl collects needles, allowing the werewolf to race ahead along the path of pins to grandmother’s house. Here he immediately kills grandmother, puts some of her flesh and a bottle of her blood in the cupboard, and presumably (it is not stated in the text) jumps into grandmother’s bed to await the arrival of the little girl.

When she arrives, the girl assumes that the werewolf in the bed is her grandmother, and the werewolf tells her to eat the meat and wine in the cupboard. She does as she is told, and then the murdered woman’s cat accuses the girl of being a slut who has eaten the flesh and drunk the blood of her grandmother. The werewolf then tells the little girl to undress and get into bed with him. The little girl, still apparently suspecting nothing amiss, asks where she should put the various items of her clothing. The werewolf replies that she should put them all in the fire, as she will have no further need for them. She does so and then gets into the bed and begins asking the questions that feature in most versions of the story: “Oh, Granny, how hairy you are!” The werewolf replies, “The better to keep myself warm, my child.” The girl works her way through the werewolf’s nails, shoulders, ears, and nostrils to his mouth, to which the response is, “All the better to eat you with, my child.”

Finally realizing her peril, the girl pleads to be let outside the house, as she needs to go to the toilet. The werewolf wants her to defecate in the bed, but she insists on going outside. The werewolf allows her to go only after tying a woolen rope to her foot. When she gets outside, having only feigned her need for relief, the girl ties her end of the rope to a plum tree. When she does not return the wolf calls out, “Are you making a load out there?” When there is no reply, he realizes that the girl has tricked him and pursues her. Just in time, the little girl reaches the safety of her own house before the werewolf catches up with her.

Versions similar to this earthy folktale have been collected throughout Europe, the New World, Africa, and Asia. Such stories contain elements that the sophisticated, urban audience Perrault wrote for did not welcome. Thus, the werewolf became a wolf, still dangerous but not as disturbing as a human that transforms into a ravening beast and preys on human beings. The down-to-earth ruse the little girl employs to escape the werewolf's intentions disappears, as does her cannibalistic consumption of grandma's flesh and blood. The paths of pins and needles are lost, and the strong sexual connotations of "grandma's" hairy body are quietly forgotten.

As well as dropping certain motifs, Perrault added some. Few, if any, of the earliest collected versions of this story mention a red riding hood or any other colored hat. Perrault introduced this element and also invented the characterization of the heroine as spoiled, gullible, and ill prepared to deal with the horrors of the wolf. Because of his strong moralizing aim, Perrault was also compelled to have Red Riding Hood eaten by the wolf instead of saving herself by her own wits as does the much more capable heroine of "The Story of Grandmother" and most of the other folk versions, including an Italian rendition *La Finta Nonna* (The False Grandmother) that features an ogress in the role of the wolf.

Despite, or perhaps because of, these additions and deletions, Perrault's reworking managed to retain much of the flavor and many of the implications of the oral versions, while presenting them in a form acceptable to a growing urban middle-class audience of the kind that would continue to polish Perrault's version of the story for subsequent generations of children.

So appropriate, powerful, and often reprinted were Perrault's and other literary adaptations of this story, that they generated folk versions of their own. It was probably one of these comparatively sophisticated, urban, middle-class versions that the Grimms heard from their informant, Marie Hassenpflug, an educated and well-bred woman of French and German Huguenot heritage. This version was the basis of their story, first published in 1812 in their *Kinder-und Hausmärchen*, more generally and less accurately called in English "Grimms' Fairy Tales." Research has also shown that various literary and by now folkloric versions of Perrault's "Little Red Riding Hood" were well known in Germany and that the Grimms would in all likelihood have heard these stories in their own childhood. They were also familiar with a play by Ludwig Tieck titled *Leben und Tod des kleinen Rotkäppchens: eine Tragödie* (1800), in which a woodsman kills the wolf that has eaten Little Red Cap. The Grimms, perhaps following this lead, and also drawing on motifs from other folktales, introduced the happy ending of their heroine, "Rotkäppchen" (Little Red Cap), and her granny, both of whom are saved by a woodsman. The Grimms also introduced an additional sequence, intended to point to a moral, in which Little Red Cap has an encounter with another wolf. She runs to grandma's house and is given advice on how to trick the wolf into death by

drowning. This coda ends with the sentence, “But Red-Cap went joyously home, and never did anything to harm any one.”

So popular was this version that it has become—usually without the second anticlimactic encounter with a wolf—the standard form of the story. As many scholars have pointed out in relation to this much-studied narrative, in addition to sanitizing the folktale versions and giving them a happy ending, these literary versions profoundly alter the character of the heroine. Thus Little Red Riding Hood, or Little Red Cap, is made into a not-very-competent and rather silly little girl who has to depend on grandma and the woodsman or hunter to get her out of trouble. In the folk versions, the heroine is duped because of her youth and inexperience, but once she realizes her plight, she uses her own wit and cunning to escape the wolf’s or werewolf’s jaws. However, so intertwined have the literary, artistic, filmic, mass media, and folkloric representations of Little Red Riding Hood become that it is now difficult, and for practical purposes pointless, to separate them.

“Little Red Riding Hood,” with its implicit and explicit suggestions of violence, bestiality, sexuality, and cannibalism has become a near-universal item in the modern popular consciousness. The story and its heroine have been used in advertising, in animated films, in children’s storybooks, pantomimes, paintings, and even in pop songs, as in a late 1960s hit that proclaims:

Hey there Little Red Ridin’ Hood,
You sure are lookin’ good;
You’re everythin’ a big bad wolf could want.

In the song, these words are followed by a high-pitched wolf call—*eeoowww!*

In addition to this predominantly European tradition of Little Red Riding Hood, an apparently autonomous tradition has been identified in Asia, particularly in China, Japan, and Korea. As with any folktale, versions vary, but the basic Asian type involves a young woman tricking a monster of some kind by threatening to defecate in the bed, by which ruse she saves her brothers and sisters from death. Other versions of the tale are also told in parts of Africa, and it seems likely that it is among the most widespread of all tale types.

Such wide interest in and longevity of one basically simple tale has attracted a never-ending stream of learned, and not-so-learned, speculation about the significance of the story and its heroine. Such speculations include the psychoanalytic approaches of Freud, Jung, Bettelheim, and others; the socio-cultural-sexual interpretations of Jack Zipes; and the cultural-historical analysis of Robert Darn-ton. The psychoanalytic approach tends to concentrate on one or a few versions, either to justify a psychosexual interpretation (Bettelheim, following Freud) or to essentialize motifs and images that recur in many different versions and to impute some universal significance to these (Jung). The main purpose of these

interpretations is generally to develop methods of using the story (and other folktales) as a form of psychological and emotional therapy.

Jack Zipes is the most prominent of a number of scholars who have argued at length that “Little Red Riding Hood” represents a significant case of a European (and, by implication, Western) cultural expression whose purpose is to regulate sexuality, and that the story in its many guises is a symbolic initiation of the young into the “rape culture” of modern times. Robert Darnton, in *The Great Cat Massacre*, uses a version (apparently incomplete) of “Little Red Riding Hood” to suggest that it is a warning of inevitable disaster and is therefore a means of understanding the mental world of the eighteenth-century French peasantry. Anthropologist Mary Douglas, using the fieldwork of Yvonne Verdier, offers a reading that stresses the cannibalistic elements of the rustic French versions of the tale and interprets them as part of the private world of village women.

When considering this story, folklorists generally espouse an intercultural approach that reflects the fundamental comparative basis of folklore studies, and they are often uncomfortable with the many interpretations of the “meaning” of “Little Red Riding Hood” (or any other folktale) that depend on what they see as an inadequate number of often poorly sourced texts, or even on digests and summaries of texts. But even in a coherent field of study with a well-developed ethnographic and conceptual framework, there are many different interpretations. Some folklorists are even inclined toward a Freudian-influenced psychoanalytic approach, as exemplified in the final essay of Alan Dundes’s *Little Red Riding Hood: A Casebook*.

While these differences simply reflect the variety of approaches to folktale heroes, they also reinforce the status of “Little Red Riding Hood” as a serious element of the everyday lives of millions of human beings over many hundreds of years—rather more than just a “fairy tale.” But it may be that the tale of Little Red Riding Hood is loosening its strong grip on us. When a fourteen-year-old girl was asked in 1999 what she knew of Little Red Riding Hood, the response was, “She killed a wolf or something, didn’t she?”

Graham Seal

See Also Fairy Tale Heroes; Hero/Heroine, Folk.

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Local Heroes

This category of heroism includes figures, real and imaginary, who are celebrated within a particular community or region. In many cases these heroes are unknown or little known outside their areas of origin. They may be local “characters,” celebrated for their eccentricities; they may be men or women who have carried out deeds of special significance to their local communities; or they may simply be figures who, often for unknown reasons, are part of local lore and custom. Sometimes these local figures may be animals, as in the case of the “Red Dog of the Pilbara,” a cattle dog famous for its ability to survive and return home in this extremely inhospitable and isolated area of northwest Australia. While Red Dog was alive, his exploits were widely known in the Pilbara region, and after his death in the mid-1990s, his legend was even further exaggerated. The legends of the dead dog were featured in a small, illustrated booklet published locally, a typical method of celebrating and perpetuating the folklore of such figures.

Generally, figures of this type have not achieved the national or international recognition of some folk heroes, such as some fairy tale characters, noted outlaws, numskulls, and some occupational heroes, among others that are repeatedly anthologized or are the subjects of various forms of commercialization. Nevertheless, the origins, motivations, and manifestations of local heroes are often similar from culture to culture. Favored types of local heroism include liars or tellers of tall tales; odd or eccentric characters; individuals who carried out feats notable to the locals; individuals who participated in, or sometimes caused, significant local events or processes; and those who gave their name to local places and/or physical features, or who have some other association, often legendary, with local places.

Clearly such figures are, by definition, vast in number and difficult to locate and identify. Some other examples include the English Tyneside heroine, Elsie Marley; the Vermont hero of the American War of Independence, Ethan Allan (1738–1789); and the Serbian Lazar, among others. Heroes of this type are part of the lore of local folk groups and contribute to the sense of place and of belonging that is the center of much community life.

Some heroes who begin their celebrity at the local level may become more widespread, sometimes through word of mouth, though much more powerfully through media networks. The Russian Dobrynya Nikitich is one example. Lady Godiva, naked horse rider of the English city of Coventry, is another, while Paul Bunyan and Febold Feboldson are American occupational heroes who have undergone similar processes. Billy the Kid is an especially useful illustration of the means through which local heroes may attain broader celebration. He was barely known outside the area in which he operated until journalists and dime-novel authors grabbed hold of his image, helping to cast it in the mold of the outlaw hero and also to spread his reputation to a wider audience and, crucially, to other media, such as theater and, ultimately, film. Other outlaw figures, with as good if not better claims to hero status, nevertheless remain largely within the folk knowledge of their local communities, as is the case with western Australia's bushranger hero, Moondyne Joe. On the other hand, the Italian boy, Giovan Battista Perasso, locally known as "Balilla," is said to have started an insurrection against the occupying Austrians in the city of Genoa in December 1746 by throwing a stone at an imperial officer. According to research by Maria Pia Di Bella, from this act of local heroism, Balilla went on to become a national hero, the subject of songs and widespread folkloric, and even official, celebration in later nineteenth-century schoolbooks.

Mythical characters of local notoriety may also achieve a wider fame, as in the example of Uncle Tom Cobleigh, a character in a southwest English song about seven men who borrow Tom Pearce's mare to go to Widdecombe Fair. The song includes the phrase "Uncle Tom Cobleigh and all" in its chorus. This phrase has passed into many varieties of the English language as a catchphrase for complete inclusivity, the equivalent of "everything but the kitchen sink."

Graham Seal

See Also Hero/Heroine, Folk; Legend.

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Magic

Self-change, communal metamorphosis, and cosmic transformation by ritual and material means, drawing upon the powers of nature and the supernatural. Magic, as it is diversely represented in the cultures of the world, relies upon belief in a universal “sympathy” between all existent things, natural and supernatural, creating a web of meaningful association linking magical knowledge with magical acts. Tapping into the unity of all things, the magical believer gains access to the inherent power or essence of material and spiritual forms and transforms both them and herself or himself. Under James G. Frazer’s classic rubric of *sympathetic magic*, there are two main subcategories that express modes of magical efficacy: (1) *homeopathic magic*, that is, magic that operates through the indirect action of similarity, like engendering like, and (2) *contagious magic*, that is, magic that operates through the direct action of contact influencing a desired outcome. Magical action can express both these modes of efficacy simultaneously since they are complementary rather than exclusive in operation. For example, a love charm can employ homeopathic substances (herbs, stones, textiles, etc., which are symbolically or medicinally associated with love and increasing desire) as well as substances that will act by contagion (a lock of hair or a small item worn or touched by the person whom the charm is designed to attract).

An important theoretical question that is part of recent scholarly discussion on magic asks whether the term is itself a proper or useful “translation” in the ethnographic and larger cultural sense of the diversity of historical and contemporary beliefs and practices within discontinuous linguistic, religious, ethnic, and regional communities. In recent theoretical discourse on magic, anthropologist Stanley Tambiah has identified the problems of the “translation” of cultures and the problem of “commensurability” of terms between cultures. In many respects, the anthropologist and the historian are in much the same quandary when it comes to the “translation of magical cultures.” However, the historian has no living informant she or he can turn to and query, “Is what you are doing the same as what we mean when we say ‘magic’?” and, if so, “What does your word ‘magic’ mean?” “What does it mean in this context, as opposed to this other?” and “What relationship does your description of what you are doing have to what you are actually performing?” Even with living informants, the anthropologist often has to rely on the social and material context of the magical behavior or

speech rather than explicit explanation or description of techniques and verbalizations, just as the historian turns to the texts around the text to provide meaningful context. Instead of turning to an individual and saying, “What does this mean?” the historian can only turn to another text and compare the form and environment of expression trying to establish its semantic field.

The semantic field for magic across the world includes verbal and gestural magic, ritual and ceremonial magic, healing and protective magic, and divination and the mantic arts, as well as magic practiced for ambivalent or openly negative social aims. Verbal magic and gestural magic are the use of mental projection and influence, often called “fascination” or “enchantment,” through casting spells, performing incantations, and spellbinding accompanied by gestures such as knot tying to accomplish or prevent an outcome. Ritual magic and ceremonial magic establish sacred time and space in individual and collective terms. Through seasonal and festival ritual cycles, the turning of the solar, lunar, or agricultural year is marked and celebrated. Human ceremonial magic is devoted to ritual cycles that mark the major life passages as well as rites of personal and professional initiation. Rituals of place create and hallow sacred space and effect spatial purification and cleansing. Healing and protective magical tools, materials, and techniques are united in ritual actions that include diagnosis of affliction, spiritual and material prescription, and ritual preparation and administration of prevention or cure. The products of healing magic are religious artifacts such as magical *charms*, *amulets*, and *talismans*, which sometimes have been pejoratively categorized as fetishism. Divination and the mantic arts cover a diversity of intuitive and precognitive techniques and systems of knowledge, including but not limited to oracular and visionary experience; guided dreaming and dream interpretation; the magical use of numbers and numerical calculations, as in numerology and astrology; divination by lots or chance; animal divination, or augury, by sign and omen; elemental divination, by means of water (hydromancy), by means of earth (geomancy), by means of fire (pyromancy), and by means of air (aeromancy); divining by pictographic symbol systems such as tarot and other types of cards; and reading the body (physiognomy and palmistry) and other natural substances (tea leaves, coffee grounds, crystals, and gemstones). Finally, magic is also identified by terms that traditionally carry a negative semantic charge, such as *sorcery*, *demonology*, *necromancy*, and *witchcraft*. These terms often are used for magical and, therefore, potentially dangerous interactions between the human and spirit worlds, as in the theurgic invocation of spirits of nature, gods, or the dead; spirit projection, possession, and mediumship; and the “laying” (to rest) of ghosts and exorcism of evil or troublesome spirits. The range of traditional cursing and malefic magic is often designated as “black” witchcraft, as opposed to healing magic or “white” witchcraft. It is also important to understand that all these activities and categories of magic are not only

Vintage tarot cards. (Carolborreda/
Dreamstime.com)



verbal, physical, and material but also and at the same time mental, emotional, and intentional in method and operation.

Magic has often been associated, in scholarship and in popular awareness, with the supernatural and identified as the *occult*. Magic and the occult share certain qualities and associations. They both rely upon a concept of truth encoded in hidden, secret, inner knowledge and practice that is available only to the initiate, giving the believer extraordinary access to the mysteries of the divinely created and existent universe. The term *occult science* refers to an esoteric, veiled, and transcendent reality, mediated by intuitive inspiration, understanding, and knowledge and interpreted by methods of study, experimental investigation, and disciplinary practice. The “occult sciences,” also known as *Hermeticism* or the Hermetic sciences, traditionally have included such diverse systems of magical belief and practice as alchemy, astrology, numerology, magical herbalism, talismanry, and amuletry, as well as systems of divining and dream interpretation, theurgy, and so forth. The occult sciences exist within a mode of knowledge and practice that accepts and even insists upon the parallelism of the natural and supernatural, a chain of causality based on empirical and nonempirical factors, and a system of explanation and instruction that contends that some of the truth (maybe the most important and central part) may not be fully disclosed but must be kept hidden. The mysteries can be interiorly apprehended as “gnosis” and even outwardly

experienced in practice, but they cannot be definitively expressed and are thus “occult” or divine secrets. The first term in the expression *occult science* is more about knowledge, the second is more about action. But both share aspects of knowledge and action. There is a need to balance the treatment of the magical, or occult, disciplines as manifestations of “folk” or “primitive” tradition divorced from the theoretical and intellectual strata of communities, cultures, and religious systems by concentrating attention on the links in magic between learned and common belief and practice.

One result of the detailed and mold-breaking ethnographic work in the latter half of the twentieth century is that it has become more difficult, if not impossible, for scholars in anthropology, sociology, the history of religion, and folk religion to speak of magic or the magical arts and occult sciences as *survivals* of earlier unsophisticated, primitive, irrational, or illogical beliefs and practices. To categorize magic and occult phenomena as cultural survivals is to call upon a dichotomous model of cultural development. The concept of survivals belongs to a methodological orientation toward religion and magic that continues to oppose an orthodoxy, embodying the normative values and institutions of official religion, to various heterodoxies, such as folk religious belief and practice. In general, when the beliefs and practices of actual believers diverge from a notion of prescribed institutional norms, they have been judged both heterodox and marginal, whether through the ascription of heterodoxy to sectarian communities or the marginalization of magical practice and occult knowledge.

The history of the scholarly literature on magic may be summarized, in great part, by reviewing the main features of the scholarly debate regarding the definition and relationship of magic, science, and religion; this debate began in the nineteenth century, principally among anthropologists and the pioneers of sociology, and continued through most of the twentieth century. This scholarly debate has revealed a rationalist bias against magic. Magic, like religion, has been predominantly characterized as not real according to the utilitarian approach of functionalist and empiricist scholarship. And the psychologizing of believers’ magical worldviews and practices often has been accompanied by an unfortunate stigmatization of magic as individual and/or social illusion, confusion, ignorance, or fraud, justified by a scholarly assumption of an irrational or pathological psychology.

By the same token, the debate regarding the relationship of magic to science has been perhaps most lively in the analysis of the late antique and medieval Hermetic or occult sciences (alchemy, astrology, talismanry, divining, and so forth). In scholarly representation, the relationship of magic to science has often been constrained by the historical “success” of the Western definitions of rationality and empirical method. Science in the Western mode is credited (by early anthropologists such as Edward B. Tylor and James G. Frazer, as well as historians of science) as the empirically based, technically proficient, and experimentally

sound realization of its earlier and evolutionary precursor, magic. In this perspective, magic becomes demoted to a pseudo-science. The medieval-based systems of knowledge and experimentation that may be called magical are labeled, therefore, pseudo-science, which is another way of saying “bad science” or “no science.” From the perspective of contemporary history of science, the magico-scientific traditions of classical and medieval civilizations for which we have extensive textual records (Hindu, Chinese, Greco-Roman, Islamic, and Christian), for example, become interesting anachronisms, failed cultural and intellectual paradigms, and flawed experimental models based on insufficient empirical evidence and incorrect interpretation of the evidence available.

Magic has also been defined in its most absolute negative—that is, as not religion—in the scholarly debate. It is always something other, usually something less, and it is often assigned the dismissive synonym *superstition*. In turn, magical belief and practice often have been devalued and characterized as primitive, vulgar, crude, material, mechanical, irrational, and nonsensical or, in other words, the opposite of religion, which is characterized as civilized, cultured, pure, spiritual, non-instrumental, rational, and meaningful. A related tendency in the debate has been to see magic as a purely antisocial response by psychologically and socially maladjusted individuals—the repository of the resentment and ill will (if not actual evil) of a society. The classic remedy is countermagic, as in the typical relationship between malicious witchcraft and witch-doctoring of tribal societies, according to germinal anthropological studies and historical studies of witchcraft in early modern peasant societies. The intellectual history of this prejudicial opposition of magic and religion has been described by a number of historians and anthropologists (e.g., Keith Thomas, Frances Yates, Carlo Ginzburg, Jon Butler, and Valerie Flint). They clearly state that the cultural bias against magic in the academic study of religion and magic (in both the humanities and the social sciences) is an inherited one, stemming originally from Christianity’s complex and increasingly hostile relationship to magic from the late antique era through the early modern era.

A corrective response to the functionalist and empiricist negation of magic that explains it away as addressing purely human social and psychological needs is the awareness among contemporary scholars that magic (whether defined within a religious system or constituting in itself a religious system) was and is considered real and effective by its community of belief and practice, above and beyond its social and psychological dynamics. The question of effectiveness and its emic criteria has received variable treatment from scholars of magic over time. Earlier anthropological and historical opinion on the efficacy of magical action emphasized the irrationality and illogic of magic, based upon Eurocentric empirical standards of the day. Later and current interdisciplinary opinion has acknowledged that magical belief and practice have a solid empirical basis in physical observation and experience. Magical practice is aimed at ordering and

making meaningful human experience and individual and social control or mediation through symbolic representation. Scholarly views that are not grounded in the actuality of magic, as a system of change on the natural and cosmic as well as personal and social levels, are not really engaged with its concerns; they cannot begin to represent what magic practitioners have believed and continue to believe they are doing and what they understand as the results of their practices.

Similarly, in response to the history of science approach to magical systems, there is no reason, based upon the ethnographic evidence available, to continue to dismiss or deny the technological competence, intellectual sophistication, and experimental/observational vigor of the diversity of historical and contemporary magical arts and occult sciences by the standards of the Western sciences. That these magical systems are not conceived to achieve the same results or establish the same paradigms as the modern Western physical sciences does not invalidate or diminish their activities. The history of science approach to them, however, does tend to distort and even block scholarly perception of the meaningful interactions of magical, scientific, and religious systems. To cite a historical example of magical science, medieval Christian and Islamic alchemy utilized the laws of physical causality for both physical and nonphysical goals considered to be outside the purview of modern Western science; thus, it is not surprising that their results should diverge. Viewed from the vantage point of Western results, the actual results achieved become invisible and incomprehensible. The “operation” or “art,” as alchemy termed itself, showed not only a philosophical orientation toward nature but simultaneously a material and processual response to nature. Alchemy as a theoretical as well as a practical expression of magic represented the union of nature and artifice.

Historical and contemporary cultures of magical belief and practice have been witnessed by extensive interpenetrating magical traditions of both learned texts (in manuscript and print) and popular/folk texts (in print and manuscript). For example, learned theoretical texts on alchemical talismanry interact with popular chapbooks of talisman and charm recipes, and theoretical texts of philosophical cosmology and astrology are matched by popular manuals of horoscope casting and astrological interpretation, as well as astrological folk almanacs. Although many cultures possess rich traditions of literate magic, all world cultures possess vast treasures of oral and ritual magical devotions expressed by ordinary believers and practitioners, as well as by magico-religious “professionals.” In the study of folk religion and folk magic, folklore and folklife scholars have compiled extensive field reports of contemporary magical belief and practice that are, in many cases, the oral observations and testimony of the living remnants of older historical traditions. Oral traditional links of this type (such as that detailed by the scholarship on oral traditional literatures) can potentially assist in the ethnographic reconstruction of magical and other kinds of folklife from earlier historical periods and also enlighten contemporary understanding.

The folkloristic study of magic has focused attention primarily upon collecting ethnographic information on folk healing systems and, in particular, on the interaction of *spell magic* and the material magical techniques and rituals of folk religious healing. Collection and classification of the oral components and contents of these two overlapping categories of folk magic have produced a number of ethnographic studies of the magical practices of individual small communities worldwide and many comparative typologies of magical healing lore by region; the variations of their material and ritual contexts are detailed, but only vestiges of a theoretical approach to magic and a small amount of systematic or rigorous contextualization of magical belief are articulated. Folklore has largely transmitted the inherited theoretical constructs of earlier (and in many cases, now outmoded) anthropological theories on magic, with comparatively little development of its own unique theoretical perspective on the subject. Folklore's strength in the study of magic, however, has been its consistent and detailed attention to the oral and material culture of magic and its delineation of the unique culture of magic expressed by the ordinary believing person and small community.

Folkloristic interest in spell magic is an obvious outgrowth and a parallel development to folkloristics' strong emphasis on traditional oral poetry and the artistry of traditional and received oral forms. Folklore scholarship on the oral epic and other genres of verse and song testifies to the numinous transformative power inherent in the performance of contemporary oral art in the works of Albert Bates Lord and Milman Parry, John Miles Foley, Robin Horton, Ruth Finnegan, and others. These oral traditional arts are reminiscent of and, in many cases, directly descended from rich multicultural historical traditions of the sacred and magical power of cadenced speech; examples include the jinn-inspired gnomic utterance of poetesses and poets of pre-Islamic Arabic, the guided speech of ancient Greek poesy and late Greek oracle possessed and transfigured by an indwelling spirit, and the fiery exhortatory poetry of the ancient Israelite prophets and judges compelled by divine mission. These historical and contemporary conjunctions of the sacred in oral art are strongly akin to the magical use of orality in spell magic, ritual chant, and incantational songs often produced and performed during states of expanded consciousness (trance, conscious dreaming, vision questing, and others) by magico-religious officiants, whether priestesses and priests, medicine workers and shamans, or witches and magicians. The deeply empowered contents, performance, and genres of oral traditional art (particularly epic and other forms of poetic oral art) have substantive and historical affinities with the sacred contents, ritual performance, and verbal genres of folk religion and magic (chant, mantra, spell, and incantation). Word magic is thus embodied for folklore in the universal genres of verbal art: oral poetry, folksong, rhyme, riddle, proverb, folk narrative or story, and memorate.

There is a representative body of folklore material, more often than not labeled *superstition*, relating to the oral lore on magical belief and practice within

diverse “folk” or “little” communities, principally in Europe and central Asia, south Asia, Africa, and the Americas. In the United States, folklorist Wayland Hand’s systematization of superstitions, for example, has numerous categories and subheadings that are distilled into the cycles of human life, the supernatural, cosmology and the natural world, and “other.” Folkloristic conception of and attention to folk magic, exemplified by Hand, most frequently associates magic with the supernatural and beliefs in luck or chance. Oral-literate folk healing systems devoted to oral magic are handled in the contexts of specific small communities, such as the oral healing spells or charms of Serbian women of the Balkans or the dissemination of charm books to use in oral recitation and the performance of cures among the powwowers of the Pennsylvania Germans, based upon earlier European textual precedent.

The material culture of magic is the other major focus of folkloristic interest and study. Within the parameters of a single family or village, individual examples of magical lore have been collected and aggregated to form a network containing the beliefs and practices of an entire region or ethnic group composed of many such small communities. The diverse materials and ritual techniques of magical healing have been cataloged in both sympathetic (symbolic) and contagious (physical) forms of magical efficacy. The concept of transference of disease in American folk medicine, for example, has numerous material and ritual expressions and sites, such as the symbolic or indirect transference involved in the “selling” of warts or the direct transference by contagion involved in rubbing the wart with a piece of potato and throwing it away (when the potato rots, the wart will disappear). Healing also can be effected by transferring disease into material objects or the living bodies of animals or trees by tagging or plugging; in addition, healing can be accomplished by transferring disease into the body of another human by making an image in effigy (symbolic transference) with hair or nail pairings (transference by contagion). Attention to the physicality and instrumentality of magical healing systems has led some medical folklorists into discussions of empirical causality and efficacy, which replicate the larger debate on the relation of magic and science in the modern ethnographic context of the relationship of magical folk healing systems to modern allopathic medicine. More work needs to be done in the interpretation of this material and in the collection and analysis of new living examples of the verbal and material cultures of magic worldwide in order to elicit fully the context of magical practice and to explore issues of magical belief. To expand folklore’s attention to contexts of practice and issues of belief, a greater commitment must be made to exploring theoretical concerns such as the redefinition of folklore’s understanding of the relationship of magic and religion and magic and science from a truly folkloristic perspective.

For the purposes of a future redefinition of magic within folklore scholarship and within the humanities as a whole, magic may be most profitably viewed as a

part of religion or a specific type of religious experience; it may not be understood properly without that relationship being the basis of the definition. This relationship may be stated as follows: Magic is always religious, but religion is not always or only magical. Therefore, magic can be best understood as a subset of religion, and it requires renewed examination as a unique category within the study of religion. As a corollary of this rudimentary definition of the relationship, it may be said that (1) there is a great deal of religious magic (that is, individual beliefs, rituals, and institutions within religions not otherwise dominantly magical in belief or practice, such as systems of belief in and ritual interaction with sacred objects, the magical use of such objects as vehicles of blessing, magical healing systems, and so forth); and (2) there are many magical religions (that is, religious systems that are predominantly magical in belief or practice). Some recent scholars in anthropology, history, and religious studies have addressed the kinship of magic and/or the occult with religion in positive ways, performing a kind of revisionist history on the original revisionist history, which separated magic from religion in the Western perspective in the first place. The need to create scholarly space for magic to be discussed as a legitimate and vital form of religious experience and expression is pressing. The resuscitation of the term *magic* is necessary because it conveys crucial affective qualities (emotional intensity and excitement) embodied by certain types of religious experience and certain religious and cultural systems as a whole, which Valerie Flint, Tom Driver, and others have recently described in the context of magical belief and practice, particularly in ritual forms. When scholarship strips religious culture, particularly religious folk culture, of these affective components by erasing magic or attempting to devalue it by categorizing magical beliefs and practices as not “real religion,” our view of that religious culture becomes distorted and diminished. The relatively recent decision among various scholarly disciplines regarding the term *magic*—that it has become too compromised by historical association with Christian and general cultural pejorative to use—has resulted in the substitution of a variety of terms, such as *ritual*, and a recasting of what was called “magic” into new conceptual and descriptive outlines consonant with that very different term. Although there is much subsumed under the term *magic* that is ritual (verbal and material activity, expressive drama, transformation of self and cosmos) and much that magic and ritual share (they are richly affective, powerful, and energetic), the term *ritual* cannot be applied to the mental and emotional features of intentionality, visualization, and interior verbalization that characterize the breadth of magical cultures worldwide.

The redefinition of magic as a part of religion and further ongoing positive attention to the subject of magic will help to clarify the theoretical relationship of magic and science to religion both within particular believing communities and between disparate communities of belief. Further, magic’s kinship with

science when redefined as a part of religion will highlight the nature of various sciences (whether medieval-based sciences such as alchemy, astrology, and talismantry or modern sciences such as biology, chemistry, and medicine) as systems of belief interacting with parallel, complementary, or competing religious systems of belief. Finally, redefinition of magic as a part of religion by folklorists and other scholars also will highlight the complex and subtle interrelationship between institutional forms of religion and the beliefs and practices of actual believers that often become most visible on the threshold of magic.

Kathleen Malone O'Connor

See Also Assault, Supernatural; Belief, Folk; Charm; Divination; Exorcism; Fairy Tale Heroes; Medicine, Folk; Religion, Folk; Ritual.

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Magicians

The hero with supernatural powers is a figure found frequently in folk tradition. Often these characters employ their magical abilities in contests with similarly endowed villains, as is the case with the diminutive African hero Fereyel, among many others. Magical powers may also be employed to predict the future, one of Merlin's abilities. They may be employed to immediately transport characters large distances, as in the story of Aladdin. They may enable the magician to cast various spells and charms or to speak with and/or to command animals, as in the Korean story of Marshall Gang Gam-Chan. Heroes with magical powers may also use them to benefit their community, as in the case of the Australian Aboriginal hero Wirreenun. Magicians may also be healers who use their magic to cure illness, as in the case of the Eight Immortals of China.

Magicians are sometimes cast in the role of national or culture hero, as in the case of Saemund Sigfússon the Wise (1056–1133) of Iceland. A priest-prince of Oddi in southern Iceland renowned during his lifetime for his learning and wisdom, Saemund became by the seventeenth century an Icelandic people's hero, symbol of their dislike of and resistance to Danish rule. He was said to have learned his magic at the Black School and was widely credited with cheating the Devil, an attribute often attached to magicians.

Other national figures sometimes attract magical attributes, including Francis Drake, Walter Raleigh, Owen Glendower, and even Oliver Cromwell. Drake, known to the Spaniards as "El Draco," was widely believed to be in league with the Devil,

and there are numerous traditions about his use of this connection to protect the nation against the Armada and to provide his local community with a water supply.

Magicians, depending on their positive or negative status, go by various names in folklore, including sorcerers, wizards, wise men or wise women, magi, witches, warlocks, demons, dervishes, and so forth. One of the most commonly encountered magical abilities is the skill of shape-shifting, or transmogrification. Being able to turn oneself, or others, into different forms has many applications, including disguise, invisibility, escape, the attainment of power, and so forth. Believed to have lived in the last half century or so before the Christian era commenced, Vikramaditya was the Raja of Ujjayini. He features in numerous folktales as a magician who can send his soul into any other body and is also able to fly. He is a wanderer and wise man with characteristics similar to those attributed to the biblical Solomon.

Magic is one of the relatively few areas of folk tradition in which heroines approach heroes in number. However, magical villainesses are also extremely common, most usually in the form of the witch, such as the Russian Baba Yaga.

Graham Seal

See Also Fairy Tale Heroes; Helpers, Folk; Hero/Heroine, Folk.

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Magic Tale

A lengthy folktale containing elements of fantasy, such as animals endowed with speech, magical objects, monsters and witches, or marvelous helpers and partners. Despite the abundance of fantasy, however, the main character of the tale is a human figure. Magic tales usually have functioned as entertainment. Stories such as “Cinderella,” “The Princess on the Glass Mountain,” and “Hansel and Gretel” are examples of well-known European magic tales. In Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson’s international tale type index, the magic tales fall under the type numbers 300 to 750.

The term *magic tale* (Aarne’s *Zaubermärchen*) corresponds to the term *fairy tale*. Certain folklorists and literary critics have suggested the use of the term

magic tale in order to distinguish oral folktales from literary tales of fantasy. Because oral and literary traditions have intermingled repeatedly in European tales during the past few centuries, favoring the term *magic tale* over the more widely known *fairy tale* is simply a matter of taste.

A number of hypotheses have been raised about the age of the magic tale genre. The suggested time of origin has ranged from the Neolithic Stone Age to the seventeenth century. Contemporary scholars, however, consider the majority of the known European magic tales to have been composed relatively late, in medieval times at the earliest. Nevertheless, magic tales may include elements (images, concepts) much older than the entire plots familiar to us today.

The most famous early anthologies of European fairy tales are Giovanni Francesco Straparola's *I piacevoli notti* (1550–1553), Giambattista Basile's *Il pentamerone* (1634), and Charles Perrault's *Contes de ma mere l'oye* (1697). Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm published their *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (Children's and household folktales) in several editions from 1812 to 1858.

Magic tales fall into a number of subcategories. The Russian formalist A. I. Nikiforov introduced the distinction between “masculine” and “feminine” magic tales in 1928. The former deal with the feats of male heroes, and the latter concern the vicissitudes of young women's lives. A prototypical example of a masculine tale is the “Dragon Slayer”; feminine tales include “Sleeping Beauty” and “Snow White.” Some popular magic tales, however, such as “Strong John” and “Tom Thumb,” are founded on hyperbolic, carnivalistic fantasy.

Because of the breadth of the magic tale's plot spectrum, one need not force the tales into the straitjacket of only one plot scheme, as the Russian folklorist Vladimir Propp attempted to do. According to him, all oral fairy tales can be morphologically deduced from the tales about the kidnapping of a princess by a dragon; the hero of these stories travels to the Otherworld, overcomes the monster with his magic object, rescues the girl, and marries her at the happy end. Propp's “mytho-heroic” scheme covers masculine magic tales well; the scheme is, however, less suitable in describing the plots of feminine and carnivalesque tales.

The main protagonists of magic tales are type characters: penniless boys or girls, nameless princes and princesses. The fantasy figures appear as animals, goblins, trolls, witches, spirits, dead people, devils, or human actors endowed with marvelous and incredible abilities. Although Christian or ethnic belief figures may appear in magic tales, the basic attitude or mode found in most oral magic tales is amoral and nonreligious.

Even though the magic tale is a prose narrative, it may include poetic lines or songs. Openings and closings are often formulaic: “Once upon a time” and “Then they lived happily ever after” transport the storyteller and audience in and out of the fictitious world. A familiar feature of this type of folktale's style and structure is repetition: the presentation of the same element in two or three versions.

Although we usually regard the magic tale solely as a source of amusement, some are didactic and moralistic. Because magic tales were entertainment for all age groups in preindustrial communities, narrators would alter tales to accommodate their audiences. A survey of European folklore collections and archives reveals powerfully erotic, humorous, and satirical magic tales that could hardly pass as entertainment intended for children.

Satu Apo

See Also Folktale; Motif; Tale Type.

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Martial Arts and Folklore

Back when fighting arts operated at the village or family level, all knowledge was folk knowledge—stories were told over drinks, around the campfire, and so on, much as family stories are told and retold today, at every holiday. At the village or family level, changes to the existing narrative only occurred with the tacit

agreement of the listeners. Change the story without the agreement of listeners, and the listeners would soon start telling new stories about the silly person who tried to change the narrative.

Today, few martial arts operate solely at the village or family level. Instead, most of them are regulated by bureaucracies. Bureaucracies produce formalized curricula, sanctioned histories, and so on, and change is approved from above. The advantage of this system is that it standardizes practices and curriculum, thereby allowing an art to survive, reasonably intact, even during times of rapid expansion.

A bureaucracy keeps money and power flowing to the center. Thus, the people nearest the center (the elite) tend to rewrite their practices and curricula to protect their own political and economic interests. For example, elite members are usually given disproportionate coverage in official histories, whereas people who have displeased the elite are written out of the official histories altogether. Nonetheless, even in the most bureaucratic systems, folklore continues to circulate informally. Some people still have the old text, or the old curriculum, or simply dislike the central leaders, and have no problem telling anyone who will listen.

Martial arts provide a rich medium for folklore studies. For traditional systems, folklore provides insight into a worldview, whereas for bureaucratic systems, folklore provides clues into what may have actually happened (as opposed to what the elite wishes had happened).

Put another way, folklore consists of a store of traditional knowledge embodied in the customs (e.g., rituals and costumes) and art forms (e.g., proverbs and tales) that are transmitted among members of a group. The folklore in turn helps build and maintain group identity. In this context, the label “folk” is not a prejudicial comment on the validity of the material so labeled. Neither should anything labeled “folk” be discounted as nonsense. Even if folk stories cannot be proven using historical documents, the stories often lead researchers to more concrete data. Even when documentation and archaeological evidence actually disproves individual stories, such elements of expressive culture reflect qualities of self-image and worldview current at the time the story was told. Thus, folk perspectives warrant our respect and attention.

Narrative

Martial folk narratives should be viewed as efforts to “flesh out” the practical aspects of the system of which they are a part. Although many of the tales eventually find their way into print, the tales frequently exist apart from written media. Committing a narrative to print, however, does not change the folk status, but print versions do give the impression of the story being genuine.

At one level, orally transmitted narratives are suspect. As any trial lawyer, police officer, or parent can attest, stories change once you get somebody on the stand. In addition, if we tell the story enough, we start to believe it ourselves. Moreover, the



A nineteenth-century depiction of Minamoto Yoshitsune, a famous and chivalrous warrior, being taught martial arts by the tengu (mountain goblins) on Mount Kurama, outside Kyoto. (Asian Art & Archaeology, Inc./Corbis)

“same” story often exists in different versions: folktales change to respond to changing social situations and audience feedback during performance.

At another level, however, orally transmitted narratives give us insight into motivations that may never have been put on paper. This happens because the fundamental goals of the storytelling are to reinforce group identity, legitimize the worldview arising from that identity, and support a common bond among members of the folk group. Thus, orally transmitted narratives are best considered as gauges of attitude rather than as funds of historical fact.

In the martial arts, lineage is a traditional means of establishing credibility for a system. As in the Bible, who begat whom? Therefore, origin narratives are among the most common types encountered in martial arts systems.

Many origin legends maintain that the point of the art’s origin lies outside the human realm. For example, Japanese tradition preserves legends of warriors who attained martial skill by contact with supernatural figures called *tengu*, meaning goblins that combined the physical attributes of men and raptors. *Tengu* had a particular talent for swordsmanship, a gift they passed along to humans who won their favor. One such fencer was Minamoto Yoshitsune (1159–1189). While Prince Yoshitsune was training to become a monk at Tokobo Monastery, an apparition of his mother visited him in a dream, and implored him to avenge his father who had died at the hands of the rival Taira clan. Although little more than a

child, he resolved to answer his mother's call by roaming the mountainous area around the monastery after dark, striking stones and trees with his wooden practice sword. In this manner, he intended to teach himself the art of swordsmanship. The King of the Tengu, observing his dedicated practice, appeared to the youth, defeated him using only a feathered fan, and then took on the task of teaching him to master the sword.

Another common motif credits the animal world with laying the foundation of a new martial art or technique. For example, although the particulars of the surrounding events vary, tradition indicates that Praying Mantis *quanfa* was developed after a Chinese martial artist known as Wang Lang heard a ferocious hissing from the bushes. He went to look, and witnessed a struggle between a praying mantis and another insect (a cicada, grasshopper, or fly, depending on the version).

Many other martial creation legends hinge on the founder witnessing a life and death struggle between different animal species. Indeed, some plots recur so frequently and are dispersed so widely that they should be considered international tale types. For instance, a clash between a snake and a bird has been claimed as the origin legend of the Chinese arts of taijiquan and *yongchun* (wing chun) and the Sumatran art of *pencak silat*; the clash also appears on the Mexican flag.

The animal-modeling motif incorporated into the taijiquan, *yongchun*, and Silat legends is not limited to Asia. In the Gidigbo wrestling of the Yoruba of West Africa, there is a technique of snatching an opponent's arm in an attempt to dislocate the shoulder or elbow. The technique is called *ja-di ilafa* ("he who fights like a gorilla"), and is said to have been derived from watching the gorilla's attempt to intimidate rival gorillas by snatching and breaking young trees.

The reasons for basing martial arts on animal models are open to speculation. More important at this point is the fact that these origin narratives provide a point of common reference and a source of core attributes (e.g., strength, ferocity, or endurance) that encourages bonding among practitioners of a martial art.

Another common genre consists of stories about the system's heroes. For example, a traditional history of *yongchun* maintains that this system was created by the Buddhist nun named Wu Mei (Ng Mui) who had escaped from a destroyed Shaolin Temple (various locations are identified) following an attack by the forces of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911). The widely spread legend continues that Wu Mei created a simple, quickly learned fighting system that she transmitted to Yan Yongchun, after whom the martial art was named.

In the United States, a unique variant of the Wu Mei legend is perpetuated within the contemporary Won Hop Loong Chuan (WHLC) system. According to this group's traditional history, Ng Mui (their preferred pronunciation) was allowed to leave the temple at the conclusion of the battle because she was "only a woman." (This feature was emphasized by one of the WHLC's female senior instructors.) Ng Mui was accompanied by her children: one who held her hand,

one she bore in her arms, and a third whom she carried in her womb. The oldest child was named Soy, and the fact that the family was later attacked by Qing troops is commemorated in a WHLC form called Inky Toy San Soy, a name said to mean “The Three Steps of Little Soy.” To continue the WHLC story, Ng Mui was said to have raised a family of ten sons and several daughters (the number varies). She developed Wing Chun (their preferred pronunciation) as a relatively low level art (in contrast to the secret family styles taught to the sons) so that the daughters could barter these arts to their husbands (famous martial artists all) in exchange for learning the spouse’s superior arts. Thus, thanks to Ng Mui, students of WHLC are ultimately heirs to the “best of the best” martial arts (Green 1997).

In Brazil, King Zumbi (1655–1695) is both a historical figure and a legendary hero, especially for capoeiristas of African descent. According to oral tradition, Zumbi was the last leader of the *quilombo* (runaway slave colony) of Palmares, in what is now the state of Alagoas, Brazil, and for years, Zumbi led resistance against conquest of his *quilombo* and recapture of his people using his skills as a capoeirista. Like the WHLC version of the Ng Mui saga, the legends of Zumbi argue for a truly superior martial art, one that enabled unarmed resistance against swords and guns. Solid early evidence connecting Zumbi to capoeira is lacking. Nevertheless, Zumbi’s central role in the African Brazilian martial arts community is attested to both by the persistence of his legends and by the commemoration of November 20, the anniversary of his execution, as a day for African Brazilian awareness.

In some cases, legendary heroes cross beyond specific martial arts groups and become the property of most of the martial arts community. Following the U.S. releases of the films *Fists of Fury* (Golden Harvest, 1971) and *The Chinese Connection* (Golden Harvest, 1972), Bruce Lee (Li Xiaolong, 1940–1973) “mania” generated a spate of contemporary legends focused on Lee’s martial prowess. Among these was a narrative that was transmitted from Hong Kong by students studying at the University of Texas at El Paso in 1972. This tale described a challenge to Lee by a cast member in one of Lee’s films who was an accomplished martial artist. In response to the invitation to combat, Lee was said to have walked over to an oil drum and pierced its metal side with a single thrust of his index finger. This act squelched the fight before it began. Both the narrator and his audience were active practitioners of *yongchun*, the system Lee had studied in Hong Kong, and, most important, the performer was an instructor and the audience members were his students. The tale used Lee as an example of what diligent practice could produce.

Counter claims regarding Lee’s superhuman abilities also have surfaced within the martial arts community. For example, Gene LeBell (1932–), a former Amateur Athletic Union judo champion, professional wrestler, and stunt man, allegedly gave Lee a beating while working on the set of Lee’s *Green Hornet* television series (ABC, 1966–1967). According to some versions, LeBell choked the actor into unconsciousness. The actual event, according to LeBell’s Web site, was a prank

during which the stunt man lifted Lee onto his shoulders and refused to put him down until the actor promised not to kill him. The two then became close friends (LeBell). The tale entered oral circulation around 2000 (probably as a result of its being posted on LeBell's Web site in that year), long after Bruce Lee's death and virtual canonization by his admirers. Reasons for the story's popularity include debunking the Lee mythology and exemplifying the maxim that no one is invulnerable.

Folk Belief

Unsurprisingly, folktales embody folk beliefs. Folk beliefs in the martial arts can range from the mundane to the fantastic, and tend to articulate relationships between the fighting system itself and larger belief systems, such as religion, politics, or medicine. Folk belief may be cast in narrative form, exist as a succinct statement of belief, or simply as allusions to common knowledge within the group.

A mundane folk belief is the one common among martial arts that the cloth belt or sash used as a mark of rank should not be washed. The usual folk explanation for this custom is that the white belt of the beginner eventually turns black through years of wear, and then, after countless more hours, turns back to a threadbare white. Thus, the natural (dis)coloration represents the effort expended in developing one's expertise, and washing unnaturally changes the color, thereby leading to a misrepresentation of the wearer's place in the martial order.

Beliefs in esoteric powers are also common. Examples are the concept known as *qi* (in Chinese) or *ki* (in Japanese). Other martial arts have comparable beliefs. For example, Southeast Asian Silat preserves a concept of supernormal power. The sources vary but are internally consistent with the prevailing religious systems (in this case, Islam). Gurus in the Sumatran style of Silat, called *Silek Bayang* (shadow Silat), reportedly have the power to kill opponents by directing their power at the victim's head, neck, stomach, or navel; some even claim to have the ability to kill with a glance. Equally esoteric Silat is said to render a practitioner invulnerable. The signature weapon of Silat, the *keris* or kris, is believed to have an animating presence akin to a soul that can trap a slain victim's soul at the moment of death, thus increasing its own power (Farrer 2006, 32–33). Some krisses are said to have the ability to rattle inside their sheaths, thereby warning their owners of danger, and some are said to leap from the sheath unbidden (Draeger 1972, 86). In the drive for Indonesian independence following World War II, some nationalists who were Silat practitioners credited the supernatural powers of their art (rather than international political pressure) for the success of their efforts to force the Netherlands in 1949 to abandon colonialism in Southeast Asia.

Similarly, belief in the *anting-anting* (a physical charm or amulet) persists among some practitioners of the Filipino martial arts. The *anting-anting* is said to confer invulnerability on the bearer, as long as it remains in his possession. The belief in the animate nature of weapons that was noted in the Indonesian

Silat community is also found among some members of the Filipino martial arts community. For example, a particular bladed weapon can have the power to cut the person who removes it from its sheath. Protection against being cut is provided by ownership of an *anting-anting* or by personal charisma that confers protection against such a “malicious” weapon.

In capoeira, the power of *corpo fechado* (“closed body”), a practice by which the body becomes invulnerable not only to the blows encountered in the *roda* (the circle in which capoeira is played) but against blades and bullets, is sometimes claimed. The closed body was achieved by the use of amulets. Oral tradition also attributes the power of shape-shifting to some capoeiristas of the past, claiming that they had the power to transform into an animal or tree, or to vanish into thin air.

Folklore, as a consequence of arising from members of a group needing to crystallize and express identity, reflects the preoccupations of the group, embodies collective self-image, projects images of others, and crystallizes worldview. Wherever it exists, folklore serves the ends of defining the group and the group’s relationships to a given social, cultural, or historical environment.

Thomas A. Green and Stanley E. Henning

See Also Art, Folk; Asian American Humor and Folklore; Chinese Folklore; Japanese Folklore.

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Marxist Approach

Various methodological approaches to the study of folklore that are based on the writings of Karl Marx (1818–1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820–1895). There is no unified Marxist approach in the study of folklore, nor is there any Marxist school allied with the study of folklore. Instead, scholars have incorporated various aspects of Marxist philosophies either in their interpretive methodology or in the selection of the folklore that they study. A great number of the Marxist theories and Marxist-informed studies in folklore are closely related to the interpretation of Marxism in the study of anthropology.

Marxism, which is generally considered to be a critique of capitalism, views capitalism as historically bounded and not a natural, universal system. Marxist theories engage several key concepts important to the study of culture and cultural expressions. Perhaps the most important among these concepts is that of dialectal historical materialism. Marxism is based on a dialectical model—one that accepts the often contradictory nature of phenomena. Materialism, usually contrasted with idealism, posits the primacy of matter. Thus, in Marxist dialectical historical materialism, the consciousness of humanity stems from the relationships with material existence. By incorporating the concept of dialectics—a theory of contradiction—with materialism, Marx and Engels provided a basis for the evaluation of history based in materialism. Nature, in this view, is not considered static; furthermore, the often contradictory phenomena of rapid change compared to slow development can be accounted for in this theory. Dialectical historical materialism thus forms the foundation for the critique of the development of capitalism and the concomitant effects of this development on cultural expressions.

Capital, in Marxism, is not a “thing” but rather both a process and a social relationship. Capital is based on the commodity. All commodities have use value and exchange value. The use value of a commodity stems from its ability to satisfy human needs, and the exchange value stems from its fixed-sum distribution. The concept of surplus value, the difference between the worker’s wages and the exchange value added to the commodity, allows for the accumulation of capital.

Mode of production and social and economic formation also are essential terms in the Marxist social critique and are used to describe stages in the development of capitalism, a system that suggests both the existence of alienable labor and global exchange networks. The term *mode of production* incorporates both the technical, physical processes of commodity production and the social relationships that underlie production in a society. This level of relationships is referred to as the infrastructure. The term *social and economic formation* refers to the interrelatedness of several coexisting modes of production in a given society. This level of relationships is referred to as the *superstructure*. Given this intense focus on processes and relationships, Marxism can be viewed as primarily concerned with the analysis of social relationships and how they are articulated. Thus, in Marxism, there is an intense scrutiny of class, ethnicity, family organization, and the division of labor along gender lines.

Neither Marx nor Engels wrote specifically on folklore or its study, although they were aware of problems associated with the study of folklore. Perhaps the two works that come closest to folklore studies in these original Marxist writings are Marx's *Ethnological Notebooks of Karl Marx* and Engels's *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. The former work engaged the concept of primitive society and precapitalist modes of production, and in the latter, Engels provided a critique of the development of the division of labor between men and women in the preindustrial household. The household, for Engels, was the original economic unit of organization, one in which all of the work was done for the benefit of the entire household. Although Marxist anthropologists have been actively engaged in the study of the development of modes of production and social and economic formation throughout history, Marxist folklorists have generally been interested in how these developments are expressed in or articulated as folklore.

One can make several major divisions to describe the practice of Marxist theories in folklore. The first major division is that between Western Marxism and Soviet-bloc Marxism. Although there has been a generally consistent development in Western Marxism and its application to the study of folklore, the development of Soviet folkloristics has been somewhat fragmented. Therefore, it may be useful to view the study of folklore in the Soviet Union and the Eastern-bloc countries in several periods: immediately following the Russian Revolution, the years under Stalin, and the years after Stalin. Given the breakup of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, there will undoubtedly be a significant change in the study of folklore in the years ahead, particularly in regard to the Marxist analysis of folklore. In recent years, two major trends in the study of folklore have emerged that are closely linked to Marxist-informed approaches. The first of these trends is the documentation and analysis of "workers' folklore." The second of these trends is the increased interest in Third World folklore, particularly expressions associated with colonialism, imperialism and state-sponsored oppression.

Western Marxism is reflected in the works of a number of scholars, most notably those influenced by Antonio Gramsci, Ernst Bloch, Georg Lukács, and the Frankfurt school. Primary among those who reflect this influence are Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, and Walter Benjamin—none of whom lived or worked in Soviet-controlled countries. Thus, these scholars were able to develop Marxist theories that did not necessarily need to reflect the beliefs or views of the Soviet Communist Party. Although they did not engage the study of folklore except in passing, they were generally aware of the potentially subversive orientation of folklore as a collective expression inherently opposed to state capitalism. Although Western Marxism is, at times, evaluated as a reaction to Stalinism—an attempt to rescue Marxian thought from unfortunate associations with Stalinist brutality—it also engages the historical dialectic of post-World War I Europe and the United States, namely, the inability of the workers there to develop a revolution as occurred in Russia. Since the early years of the Institute of Social Research, Western Marxism has become a well-developed approach to cultural criticism, which includes the analysis of folklore at least to some degree. In the United States, José Limón and Jack Zipes are the scholars most engaged in the application of Western Marxist thought to the analysis of folklore. In his analysis of German fairy tales, a study influenced by the writings of Bloch, Zipes relied on Marxist theories to reveal social contradictions in Western culture that, in turn, find expression in the fairy tales. He suggested that “the commodification of Western culture creates a magic spell over society . . . so that, enchanted and blinded by commodity fetishism, we act against our own humane interests” (Zipes 1979). Limón also suggested that the Western Marxist interpretation of folklore is particularly allied with a performance-centered approach to folklore, noting that “in the very aesthetic act of performance may be found an inherent oppositional quality of all folklore. . . . All such performances may be displays of the possibility of hanging on to the use and value of things . . . in face of those who would turn all of life into acts of consumption” (Limón 1984).

The study of folklore in Soviet Russia and other Soviet-bloc countries does not reflect a consistent development. Prior to the Russian Revolution in 1917, the subject and methodologies of folklore were similar to those in the West, with a significant focus on the study of the *byliny* (epic). Immediately following the revolution, there was little focus on the study of folklore. It was not until the 1920s that it was once more engaged, and at that time, there was a flowering of formalist studies, Vladimir Propp’s *Morphology of the Folktale* being among the most notable works in folklore from that period. Nevertheless, ideology did not comprise a major aspect of these works. Formalism quickly fell out of favor, however, and, along with Western methodologies such as those of the Finnish School, it was abandoned on ideological grounds. In the late 1920s, Maxim Gorki’s formulation of the classical Marxist view that folklore reflected the

collective spirit of the working classes and therefore was a valuable achievement gained acceptance and influenced the direction of Soviet folkloristics.

In the 1930s, folklore studies moved toward an examination of both ideology and social problems as expressed by the workers in their songs and stories. The study of individual narrators and the interplay between ideology and individual creativity became a major area of study, as evidenced by B. M. Sokolov's study of *byliny* singers. The prior view of the aristocratic origins of the *byliny* was rejected and replaced by the new interpretation of the genre as a creation of the people. Another area in which Soviet folklorists began to work was the collection and analysis of previously ignored folk genres, such as satires on religious figures and aristocrats, *skazy* (or personal experience narratives), the folklore associated with the revolution, and the folklore of workers. Folklore also was used as a source for and an object of propaganda. Not only was there an interest in the folklore of the workers and the revolutionary spirit expressed in traditional genres, there were also new ideological songs and stories composed in folkloristic style.

With the advent of Stalinism, the study of folklore in the Soviet Union became somewhat constricted, and folklorists were forced to abandon all forms of comparative studies and focus instead on the uniquely Soviet aspects of revolutionary cultural expression. After de-Stalinization in 1956, Soviet folklorists were once again allowed to make reference to Western works in their scholarship. Also, folklorists attacked the manifestly nonfolkloric forms of *byliny* that detailed the exploits of heroes of the revolution and Soviet leaders. Soviet folklorists also began to study the folklore of ethnic minorities living in the Soviet Union. The ideological slant of these studies was closely linked to the dialectical historical materialism of classical Marxism. By studying the folklore of the minority populations, their cultural expressions could be included by folklorists in the analysis of the historical development of societies. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, it is unclear what the future holds for Marxist approaches to both the analysis and collection of folklore in these previously Marxist-informed societies.

The study of workers' folklore also has become a significant object of study outside of Soviet-influenced countries. In Scandinavia, numerous scholars have been involved in both the collection and analysis of workers' lore, and throughout the 1980s, several conferences were held specifically concerned with workers' culture inside and outside of Scandinavia. In the United States, the study of workers' folklore is often considered under the rubric of "occupational folklore." Studying the folklore of workers contrasts with the romantic project of studying the folklore of peasants, dominant in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century folklore studies.

The fastest-growing field of study in Marxist folkloristics involves the Third World countries and their development. The transition from precapitalist to capitalist modes of production is a significant historical change. Michael Taussig, in his study of Latin American plantation and mining communities, examined how

precapitalist symbols, particularly the devil, are used to negotiate the fearful transition to capitalism. In his study, he linked the devil as manifest in the folklore of the workers to commodity fetishism. According to Marxist theory, abstractions and social relations tend to become regarded as things—they are objectified. In the extreme case, the objectified becomes reified and appears to take on its own agency—it becomes fetishized. In the Marxist critique of capitalism, commodities are seen as becoming fetishized, and this fetishism, in turn, finds expression in folklore, according to Taussig. Precapitalist symbols, such as the devil, are then used to express phenomena of the emergent capitalism. Studies based on Taussig's evaluation of the use of precapitalist symbols to explain emergent capitalist phenomena could include the examination of economic exchange in peasant societies as expressed in their oral narratives.

Timothy R. Tangherlini

See Also Cultural Studies; Historical Analysis.

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Mask

Any sort of facial transformation or adornment and the costume and behavior that necessarily accompany it. In this sense, masks can range from the application of makeup to the use of elaborate head coverings. As the basic sites of communicative expression and identity, the head and face are subject to extremely diverse forms of masking in cultures throughout the world. Masks and masking techniques can be viewed as arts and crafts, but their cultural function of altering the faces of individuals in everyday life, drama, ritual, and celebration also must be considered. The concept of “face” implies more than anatomical features. It includes all of the social and symbolic meanings members of a society associate with specific physical appearances. The considerable social significance of the face accounts for stereotyping based on facial features, such as eye shape, nose size, and skin color, and for the human propensity to distort these features through masking. By simultaneously releasing individuals from their accustomed face and burdening them with expectations associated with another, masking reveals individual and cultural explorations of personality.

The production of masks consists of several stages: collection of raw materials, preparation of the materials, crafting the mask from them, and application of the mask. Materials for mask making include wood, shells, grasses, feathers, and



Actor wears a 200-year-old wooden mask in a carnival parade in Bad Hindelang, Germany, 2010. (Filmfoto/Dreamstime.com)

other natural products, papier-mâché, ceramic, treated animal skins, plastic, rubber, and metal. The raw materials may be carved, shaped, combined, painted, or otherwise manipulated. In some contexts, any member of the given society may perform each of these preparatory tasks; in others, the tasks may be restricted to professionals and those in other specialized roles. For example, although many participants in European carnivals purchase their masks from professional craftspeople who use materials procured commercially, their New World counterparts more readily construct their own, original masks from materials at hand. Application and use of certain masks may likewise be restricted to specific individuals, groups, or occasions, such as shamans in some rituals. Some masks may be reserved for use by one gender.

The functions, meanings, and significations of masks must be determined in relation to the specific cultures and events of which they are a part. A surgical mask means something very different in an operating room than on the street at Halloween. Many Native American masks have religious significance restricted to specific rituals and dances, including healing and puberty ceremonies. Some masks have the power to transform the person wearing them into the figures they represent.

Traditional occasions for masking generally cluster at points of transition in the annual cycle and the life cycle, such as changes in seasons, birth, and death. Most European scholars formerly took this as an indication that all masking events originated in a primitive, pre-Christian mentality geared toward spirits of nature that govern fertility and renewal or spirits of the dead that can affect the living. From a different perspective, transitional points can be seen as pauses in the productive cycles. The increased leisure time during these phases allows for eased structures of social engagement. In this context, masking occasions, like other forms of play and fantasy, provide a possibility for the exploration of alternative identities. This exploratory operation often focuses on inversions, opposites, and exaggerations. Some of the most common masking strategies involve the conflation of incompatible binaries: male/female in cross-dressing and androgynous masks; human/beast in the many animal masks found globally, in wild man figures, and in the Kwakiutl man within a raven within a bull; plant/animal in vegetation demons made of agricultural waste or excessive local natural products, such as bog moss creatures; insider/outsider in the frequent, stereotyped depiction of ethnic groups, such as Jews, Gypsies, and Moors in Europe, Indians and Africans in North America, and white anthropologists in Africa; and human/supernatural in masked depiction of deities.

Exaggeration takes the form of extended and exploded features. Bulbous noses, puffy cheeks, and monstrous mouths appear on masks in many societies. Giant figures walking on stilts or carried in processions also utilize this trope, as do “big-heads” with their oversized heads dwarfing the bodies on which they sit. Jewelry, implants, and means of extending features offer other techniques for facial distortion. Rarely does a mask attempt an accurate representation of a human

face. Seemingly human masks often involve subtle caricature or reduction of distinctive features. Some masks, such as stockings or plastic Halloween faces, take the reduction of facial features to an extreme, creating eerie effects.

Although the disguise afforded by masks frees wearers from their conventional personalities, it does not allow unrestricted exploration of alternative roles. Cultural expectations, explicit or perceived, also impose restrictions on the sounds, gestures, and movements made when wearing certain masks. In the carnival of Elzach, Germany, masked Schüttig figures must speak in a falsetto or emit gruff growls. In ritual and drama, maskers often have precisely choreographed roles. A child dressed for Halloween is likely to behave in a manner associated with the figure represented by the mask, just as the performer of a Navajo bear has specific duties and roles. However, the behavior of these maskers may tend toward caricature and exaggeration, much like the facial features presented in their masks.

Outside of their culture contexts, masks often retain elements of their power and fascination. The booming market for masks as art pieces, the popularity of plastic surgery, even the effect of dismembered heads displayed in various ways all reaffirm the significance of the face in human communication and thought.

Peter Tokofsky

See Also Carnival; Costume, Folk; Drama, Folk; Festival; Mummung.

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Material Culture

A mode of cultural expression in which technological means are used either to produce artifacts or to modify segments of the natural landscape. Frequently described as including food, shelter, and clothing and therefore as essential for

the maintenance of human life, material culture also includes objects that may be classed as amenities, such as varieties of household implements, and luxuries, such as paintings or items of jewelry. Since human beings are constantly making or using things, a person's entire biography from birth to death can effectively be monitored by following the flow of objects throughout his or her life. Larger social themes can be investigated as well by making similar observations across the experience of an entire community. Thus, students of material culture, though they are expected to pay close attention to the description and evaluation of artifacts, are even more concerned with how people use objects and assign meanings to them. The thought and behavior associated with material items is, in the end, considered more important than their physical attributes.

Within the phrase material culture, culture is ultimately the more significant term, for no matter how intriguing or emotionally satisfying an object's form, color, or texture, its deepest significance will not differ in any fundamental way from the prime messages of music, oral literature, dance, or any other expressive form. Material culture specialists should be seen, then, as students of a segment of human conduct. They even may play the lead role in the study of particular locales where things and property are deemed crucially important or where artisans are highly esteemed. In materialistic places where the production, accumulation, and display of goods are central to social definition, it would seem most prudent to concentrate the greater share of scholarly inquiry on aspects of material culture. And where there is little in the way of firsthand data about a group, particularly for those vanished historical communities that have left little or no legacy in written or documentary form, material culture provides the most secure means for retrieving salient features of everyday life. This is because an object, unlike a story or a song, does not require the presence of a living performer; an artifact can be said to "perform" its biography by the simple fact of its presence. Although the mission of material culture study may complement a wide array of disciplines, including art history, the decorative arts, architectural history, geography, and social history, the greatest similarities are found with the objectives of anthropology, particularly with its subfield archeology. Indeed, material culture research is, because of its utility as a means of historical recovery, often referred to as "aboveground archaeology."

The study of any object proceeds via the analysis of its components or attributes. Although these may be prioritized in different ways, all objects, it is agreed, have a physical form, a method of manufacture or construction, and a pattern of use. Of these features, form is usually the first to be considered since it provides the most trustworthy basis for developing a typology and then for making assessments about definitive characteristics and relevant comparisons. Through formal analysis, one develops a three-dimensional description of an object, and once a particular object—a chair, for example—is compared with other objects of a

Artifact

Any object made or modified by humans. The term derives from the Latin *arte factum*, meaning something made with skill. The object expresses the mental template of its maker and the culture at large, through the shaping of raw materials that result in the artifact's tangible form. The attributes seen in an artifact are based on traditional, functional, and/or technological requirements of the user and culture. For these reasons, few artifacts have only one attribute or meaning.

The varied approaches used during the last century to study artifacts began with the description and classification of objects, usually by museum curators. The artifacts were grouped according to type, based on their morphological features. Nineteenth-century evolutionary theory, combined with the diffusionist theories of early twentieth-century anthropologists, contributed to the development of stylistic analyses of artifacts, as well as interest in the techniques and technology used in making them. The early fieldwork of cultural anthropologists such as Bronislaw Malinowski, Franz Boas, and Ruth Benedict and archaeologists such as A. V. Kidder focused on the interrelationship of objects to sociocultural patterns and structures.

Since the 1960s, the study of artifacts has drawn on a number of disciplines in the physical and social sciences to extract information not readily apparent to the observer. The most recent efforts now inform an integrated approach that includes aspects of the previous approaches. Artifacts now “speak” to the observer as repositories of human communication and interaction. Reading the text of an artifact, rather than just focusing on its physical attributes, is another way of accessing the culture being studied.

Although artifacts occupy a central place in anthropology and folklore studies, each discipline differs in its approach and analyses. It is understood that through artifacts, researchers in both disciplines can attempt to comprehend the beliefs, values, attitudes, ideas, and assumptions of a society or group of people at a given point in time. So the main distinction that separates the two disciplines is the factor of time.

For the archaeologist, the *processes* (both mental and physical) by which an artifact is produced are less tangible than for the folklorist since archaeologists often study cultures that are extinct. At best, the archaeologist can only hope to accurately guess at these processes through the reconstruction of events and scientific study.

For the folklorist, however, the artifact or folk object is part of an informal learning process whereby, through tradition, the mental and physical aspects of the object's manufacture are seen in the creative process of the producer and are recorded by the folklorist. In turn, when the artifact's form is read like a text, then certain motifs can be recognized and compared to known traditions. In this context, the artifact is complete and historical, so there is no mystery as to its relative context or creator.

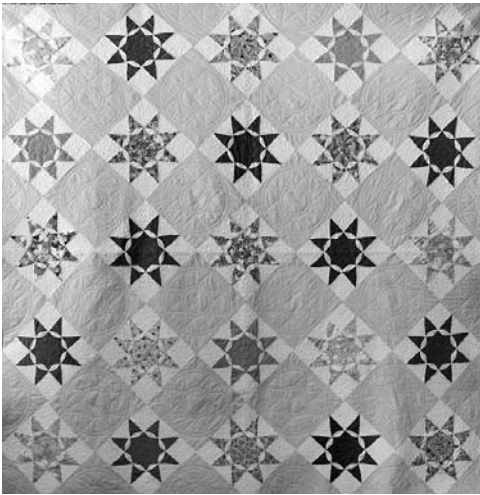
Regardless of disciplinary orientation, the artifact continues to play a central role in bringing the culture to the researcher. In this sense, the artifact, as reference point, mirrors for posterity the ideas and systems of the culture that produces it purposefully or accidentally.

Georgia Fox

similar class—the chairs produced in a given region—one can determine, with reasonable confidence, if the particular object is representative of local practice, an extraordinary masterwork, or only a quirky aberration. All of an object's features bear cultural meaning, but features of form connect most directly to the process of design and thus to the idea of form rather than to physical appearance or social usage. This is so because traditional forms derive from deeply coded notions of order and propriety. These ideals are less likely to be revealed by secondary attributes, such as color, finish, or materials. In looking at form, one engages the cultural rules that govern the way an artifact is conceived in the mind of its creator.

How an object is constructed involves not only the tools and techniques employed but also the selection and procurement of materials. In studying a potter, for example, one would first determine what type of clay is used, how it was obtained, and how it was prepared for use. Usually, it would be mined, transported to the workshop, mixed with water, weighed out into units known by experience to produce vessels of a conventional size, and kneaded into solid lumps. The investigator would then follow the sequence of steps required to transform the raw clay into a vessel, noting how the lump of clay is pinched and pulled while being turned on the potter's wheel. Next follows the drying and glazing process (sometimes repeated twice), and finally, the brittle pot would be loaded into the kiln and fired to rocklike hardness. If one had an expert knowledge of ceramics, many of these steps could actually be inferred from the examination of a finished pot. However, it is best to observe the processes of construction or manufacture firsthand, for there are always procedures that leave no telltale marks, and more important, an individual artisan's personality is likely to be manifested more clearly in the production rather than the design stage. Although a traditional potter might make a particular type of churn according to the dictates of local custom, the curvature of its sides, its height, the position of handle attachments, its color, and many other attributes are mainly the result of personal taste and habit. In studying production techniques, one encounters numerous opportunities for innovation, however modest. Some of these opportunities will show up as features in the finished artifact, and others only in the skilled use of tools, as the so-called tricks of the trade.

How an object is used is most likely to reveal more about its destination and consumer than its circumstances of creation. An artisan may have intended that an object be used in a particular way and thus may have designed it with special attributes. Some potters, for example, place an extra handle near the bottom of their storage crocks so that their contents can be more easily poured out. However, if this same crock is purchased by a contemporary urbanite, it might end up as an umbrella stand or serve as a base for a lamp, so that the extra handle is rendered functionless. Once an object leaves its creator's hand, it can serve purposes or acquire associations that he or she never imagined. Thus, compiling the



Traditional quilt from the 1930s. (Marilyn Stevens Photography)

“social life” of an artifact is a distinct task of material culture research that may take one well beyond an object’s apparent function.

A quilted bedcover, for example, is generally understood as an item of sleeping equipment meant to protect and comfort a sleeping person through a cold night. Yet a quilt does so much more than that. The design of its top side, often colorful and geometrically complex, warms the spirit as much as the body. Intriguing to look at, it may even affect the overall look of the space in which it is used, simply by being the largest item in the room. Further, since quilts are usually produced by women, their decorative impact brings a woman’s signature to a building that was likely constructed by men. A quilt may then constitute a crucial feminizing component in the effort to transform a house into a nurturing home. Since the materials used in quilts frequently were scavenged from other sewing projects, various bits of cloth will serve as mnemonic devices that awaken recollection of poignant moments in the family’s history. A quilt may then enhance solidarity by encouraging the telling of important narratives. Because any artifact will simultaneously serve several purposes, there is an obligation in material culture research to portray something of the daily life of objects. Consequently, one is inevitably led beyond discussions of expected pragmatic functions to considerations of such aspects as aesthetics, ethical responsibilities, gendered social roles, or the preservation of memory. This is because in studying how artifacts are used, one is soon drawn into the social contexts that surround objects. In considerations of form and construction, the artifact is the center of attention, but in discussions of use, the artifact may only serve as a means of entry into other social concerns. In this sort of inquiry, the artifact even may seem to fade into the background as other matters are highlighted.

The study of the social contexts surrounding artifacts provides the most common meeting ground for the various disciplines with proclaimed interests in

material culture. But if the commentary about material culture is not grounded in things—in the concrete experience of the artifact—objects are reduced to mere illustrations, to pictures that serve only to adorn the pages of a scholar's text. It is a fundamental assumption in material culture research that artifacts are texts, albeit in tangible form. Thus, they have to be treated as vital, firsthand evidence and not as ornaments that will enhance accounts generated primarily from written records. That the reputation of the artifact still lags well behind the document as the datum of choice is due to a long-standing bias in scholarly tradition that favors words over things. There is, consequently, a general lack of what might be termed “artifactual literacy” among scholars who, though they can read documents, do not know how to look beneficially at material evidence. Until the ability to “read” objects is more widespread, the study of material culture will continue to be snubbed as “pots and pans history.”

Since material culture is so pervasive in human history, it makes little sense to ignore the ever-present, ever-constant messages that it provides. Folklorist Henry Glassie argues that via the artifact, scholars might recover truly scientific procedures for their enterprise, avoid the biases of elitism, and develop more convincing explanations—all of which should lead to what he calls a “more human history.” Such a laudatory project, however, is not easily achieved. Artifacts are complex texts layered with subtleties and the seeming contradictions of simultaneous functions. Although all objects convey cultural meaning, some convey that meaning more effectively and with greater impact. Therefore, in selecting an object or class of objects to study, it is important to choose well. One should select things that are complex and thus invested by their makers with considerable effort in design and manufacture: The investment of time, resources, and energy provides assurance of significance. The most preferable object also should be tied to a place, that is, rooted to a locale in the case of a building or intimately connected to a family in the case of a cherished keepsake. In either instance, the object is less likely to be removed from its original context and will more readily allow access to the circumstances of its creation and use and therefore to its social meanings. Finally (and this is perhaps obvious for historically motivated projects), one should select artifacts that are durable and enduring. Things that have survived the assaults of time have the capacity to take us back directly to the periods when these items were first made. They thus are quite useful in developing an accurate historical baseline. Things that continue to be made according to the dictates of traditional authority and in large numbers illuminate well the satisfactions of custom and the dynamics of social identity. Used together with very old items, they facilitate confident analysis both of origins and subsequent developments, involving a complex balance of continuity and change over time.

Material culture research is, among American folklorists, a relatively young enterprise. Even though a number of the founding members of the American

Folklore Society in the late nineteenth century were associated with museums and were thus students of artifacts, it was not until the 1960s that material culture began to be more fully accepted. However, studies of folk architecture, art, craft, foodways, costume, and agriculture published since then have effectively demonstrated the value of this specialization. Indeed, material culture courses have become regular offerings in university curricula, and papers on tangible aspects of traditional culture are now a staple of academic conferences. One suspects that in the future, it will be normal practice for folkloric ethnographies to incorporate and blend together evidence of oral, musical, and material traditions.

John Michael Vlach

See Also Architecture, Folk; Art, Folk; Costume, Folk; Craft, Folk.

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Medicine, Folk

“Unofficial” health practices and beliefs found in all societies. These are both religious (e.g., the use of prayers for healing or the belief that sin is a cause of disease) and material (e.g., the belief that eating a hot breakfast will prevent winter colds or the use of jewel weed to treat poison ivy). These beliefs and practices exist as complex systems related to the other beliefs, values, and attitudes of those who hold them. Folk medicine is not considered “false belief,” and conventional medicine has, in fact, adopted many items from folk tradition. The oldest modern conception of folk medicine placed it within a system of layers, lying between official, scientific medicine (the top layer) and primitive medicine (the bottom layer). This scheme reflected the nineteenth-century view of cultural evolution in which medicine, like the rest of culture, was seen as having developed from its crudest, most primitive form into its modern, Western, highly sophisticated state. All that was most effective in medicine was retained during this evolutionary ascent, while discarded and obsolete ideas drifted downward and were preserved in the lower layers. This notion is summed up in the German term *gesunkenes Kulturgut* (sunken cultural materials). Although this model remains influential in popular thought, the evolutionary view of culture on which it was based has now been discarded or extensively revised by most scholars.

Current definitions of folk medicine show two main influences. Folklorists interested in health beliefs and practices in modern, technologically advanced societies have focused primarily on those found in specific cultural and subcultural groups and transmitted, in large part, by oral tradition. Examples would be the *brauche*, or “powwow,” tradition among Pennsylvania Germans, *curanderismo* among Mexicans and Mexican Americans, and the herbalism traditions found in Appalachia. Anthropologists usually have studied folk medicine in developing countries. This setting has led them to emphasize the culture-exchange relationship of folk medical systems both with local, indigenous traditions and with the official medical system of the politically dominant national culture. The latter is often modern, Western medicine. From the fieldwork of these two disciplines, a general definition of folk medicine has evolved, encompassing health traditions that exist alongside but at variance with whatever other medical system is recognized as “official” in the local context. As a result, the concept of folk medicine has broadened.

If folk medicine is unofficial health beliefs and practices, it must be recognized that *officialness* is a relative term, rooted in context. Something is official if it is authorized in a formal way. Scientific medicine is the official medicine of the United States through authorization by a host of government sources (e.g., the office of the surgeon general), the bodies that accredit medical schools, and so forth. Folk health traditions are not given official standing by such agencies,

and many lack formal authority structures of their own. There is no office or agency among folk herbalists in a region that can specify standard procedure or regulate practice. Oral tradition has processes that support standards and constrain practice, but they do not speak with one voice. They also do not command the resources and power that more formal institutions do. Therefore, folk medicine tends to rely heavily on oral tradition, and this is one reason why it tends to develop locally distinct forms, whereas official medicine shows much greater consistency across large distances.

Folk Medicine Traditions as Health Systems: Consensual and Individual

Systematic organization is one feature of folk medicine traditions that tends to produce stability, and this is a characteristic that is shared with other kinds of belief traditions. In the old concept of folk medicine as obsolete notions from “high culture,” there was a tendency to view beliefs and practices as individual pieces. However, recent students of folk medicine have recognized that these diverse elements actually operate within an orderly set of relationships, forming a “health system.” Health systems may be viewed in either of two ways: as the consensus among a number of people or as an individual’s collection of health-related information and attitudes. For example, scientific medicine, Pennsylvania German powwow, and classical Chinese acupuncture are consensual health systems; the beliefs and practices of a particular doctor, powwow, or acupuncturist are individual health systems.

It is the relationships among the elements of a system that tend to give it stability and coherence. Many herbalists, for instance, believe that the special virtue of plant medicines lies in their “naturalness,” which is considered desirable because nature is inherently reasonable; that is, things are as they are in nature for functional reasons. Some attribute this inherent reasonableness to the goodness of the divine plan, and others cite the operation of evolution. Many see the two as indistinguishable. However this natural order is understood, it is coupled with the belief that when humans attempt to increase productivity or comfort or to speed up and amplify natural effects without an appreciation of the real reasons for that order, the order becomes deranged, with unhealthy consequences. Heart disease is believed to result, in part, from the increase of refined foods in the diet—a change that is convenient (longer shelf life, easier preparation) but unhealthy. Similarly, although the treatment of heart disease by synthetic digitoxin is faster and more profitable than treatment using the leaf of *Digitalis purpurea*, the herbalist believes that the leaf is safer and has a broader effect. So an herbalist health system may embody an entire set of attitudes, values, and beliefs that constitute a philosophy of life, not merely a batch of remedies. This systematic view even extends explicitly to the moral questions of disease and healing, with laziness and greed being considered important contributors to sickness.



Acupuncture is a traditional Chinese medical procedure in which practitioners insert hair-thin needles through the skin to stimulate points of the body. (iStockPhoto.com)

The more complex and the more integrated such a health system is—that is, the greater the number of orderly relationships among its parts—the more stable it will be. One very important element that adds complexity is the tendency of folk medicine traditions to combine both natural elements, such as herbs, massage, and dietary rules, with supernatural elements, such as divine sanction for the natural approach, the efficacy of prayer, the idea of supernaturally caused disease, witchcraft, or the evil eye. The division of folk medicine into “natural” and “magico-religious” domains, common through much of twentieth-century scholarship, misses the powerfully integrative tendency of most traditions. This integration of material and spiritual elements is one of the great attractions of folk medicine to many of its users.

No matter how complete and exclusive a consensual health system may appear, the individual systems of those who comprise it will be somewhat eclectic. The individual systems of most folk healers and their patients will include ideas not only from their folk tradition but also from modern medicine, from religion, and so forth. By the same token, most medical doctors hold some folk beliefs along with their scientific beliefs and values. This individual diversity encourages the constant flow of influences among the health systems within a society because each person actually constitutes a bridge connecting two or more traditions.

The Dynamic Interaction of Folk Medicine Traditions

Folk medical systems are vigorous in the modern world, and they are in a constant state of dynamic interaction with each other and with official cultural institutions. As a result, they contribute elements directly to official medicine, and some develop their own official structures.

Given the definitions of folk medicine discussed earlier, all religious healing is folk medicine within the context of most modern societies because religious beliefs and practices are very different from the beliefs and practices of official medicine. However, certain religious healing beliefs do achieve varying levels of official religious, as opposed to medical, status. Thus, for example, a belief in miraculous, divine healing is simultaneously a folk medical belief and an official religious belief within several major Christian denominations. This simply reflects the complex and context-bound nature of the folk-official distinction. Further, specific kinds of beliefs in religious healing vary along the folk-official continuum within particular religious traditions and over time. For instance, since the 1960s, the charismatic movement has risen to widespread popularity among Christians around the world, and a central feature of the movement is a strong belief in miraculous healing through prayer. Although it began as a grass-roots movement, its broad appeal eventually produced accommodation and change within the established denominations, including a reemphasis of the healing mission of religion. In this process, prayer healing, which has always been a major feature of folk medicine, was returned to at least semiofficial status within many Christian denominations.

Herbal healing traditions have existed in most regions of the world. The most widespread healing system currently serving as a vehicle for herbal healing in North America is the health food movement. Until the counterculture revolution of the 1960s, health food stores remained predominantly Seventh Day Adventist enterprises, a carryover from the health reform movements of the turn of the century, and their clientele was primarily an older and rather conservative group. With the development of the ecology and back-to-the-land movements, this picture changed radically, and by the 1970s, the character of the natural food stores, with their young clientele, had a major impact on the health food industry. Today, one can find herbs coming from traditions all over the world in U.S. health food stores. These stores are not only commercial concerns, they also serve as important links in folk medical oral networks. Like the religious healing revival before it, the natural healing complex burst its original cultural bounds and became an influential force in American health belief. And now, the American Botanical Council has been established to serve a variety of political, commercial, and scientific purposes, representing herbalists from a great variety of traditions. The council also publishes a peer-reviewed journal called *HerbalGram*. Many herbalists do not even know the council exists, and the official power of the council is

relatively small compared to such structures in conventional medicine. Nonetheless, herbalism is clearly becoming more formally organized, and this change further enhances its influence.

In 1992, the National Institutes of Health established, under congressional mandate, the Office of Alternative Medicine (OAM) to fund studies of the efficacy of all sorts of popular treatments. Many of the practices that the OAM is seriously investigating are among those that have been traditionally considered folk medicine, ranging from herbal treatments to laying on of hands and distant prayer for healing. Internationally, the World Health Organization has recognized the importance of folk medicine and has developed programs intended to help folk healers and medical doctors to work together in delivering health care in underserved areas of the world. Clearly, official approbation and the development of internal official structures does not mark a sharp boundary that separates folk medicine from all other health beliefs and practices in the modern world. The category of folk medicine constitutes a range within which traditions differ from one another and change over time with regard to their “officialness,” and folk, commercial, and official institutions influence each other constantly.

Although oral tradition is relatively important, especially in less formally organized traditions, it cannot be used as a definitional requirement of folk medicine. Most of the traditions studied as folk medicine use print to some extent. For example, in the Pennsylvania German powwow tradition, *Der lang verborgene Freund*, a book of charms and recipes compiled and published in 1820 by a German immigrant named John George Hohman, has remained in print and in use to the present day in both German and two English translations. This book and others, including manuscript charm collections by individual practitioners, have not only helped preserve the tradition but also implemented its spread, especially since Hohman’s book was sold through the Sears Roebuck catalog around the end of the nineteenth century. Although oral tradition remains an important aspect of folk medicine, the use of magazines, books, television, and the Internet by traditional health systems today is a mark of their vigor and adaptability.

The Persistence and Prevalence of Folk Medicine

The modern picture of who uses folk medicine also has undergone radical changes. It was long assumed that folk medicine persisted in places where modern, scientific medicine was not available or as a survival among early generations of immigrants from traditional societies. It was assumed that higher education and familiarity with scientific medicine would result in sole reliance on medical doctors and hospitals. It is no doubt the case that isolation and lack of acculturation tend to reduce the rate at which any cultural institution changes, but change and adaptation are the natural state of tradition. It is now evident that the changes in folk medicine brought about by modern communication, geographic mobility,

and other forces that reduce cultural isolation have not led to the demise of folk medicine—quite the contrary. A study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in 1993 found that 34 percent of Americans had used what the investigators called “unconventional interventions” within the preceding 12 months. Among those practices mentioned in the survey were several forms of folk medicine, including herbs and spiritual healing. This high rate of use came in spite of the exclusion from the survey of basic prayer for healing, probably the most widely used variety of folk healing. The survey also found, as have other studies in the United States and Europe, that use of these traditions was positively associated with higher education.

This finding comes as no surprise to scholars who do fieldwork in contemporary folk medicine. Although the children and grandchildren of some immigrant groups have rejected traditions including folk medicine as impediments to “Americanization” and their social aspirations, others in the community have shown great interest in folk medicines with which they did not grow up. The Caribbean traditions of spiritism, *espiritismo* (Puerto Rican) and *santería* (Cuban), both with strong healing elements, now attract supplicants and members from the Anglo community in the northeastern United States. In Puerto Rico and the northeastern United States, there have even been projects to bring spiritists and mental health professionals into a collaborative, collegial relationship to work together in community mental health. Like acupuncture (which it accompanied to the United States), classical Chinese herbalism is sought out by patients from all kinds of ethnic groups and social classes. Psychotherapists and psychoneuroimmunology researchers are turning to the techniques of shamans to treat both psychological illnesses and physical diseases such as cancer. There is, in fact, a “neoshamanic movement” whose members seek to use drumming and other shamanic techniques to attain trance states both for self-fulfillment and for the treatment of others.

In the 1960s, cross-traditional influence and the adoption of beliefs and practices by people not raised with them would have been seen as “contaminating” tradition. The result, especially when it began to be transmitted in books and magazines, might have been called “fakelore.” But it is clear that this view is outmoded today, particularly concerning folk medicine. Folk medicine always has exchanged materials and ideas with official medicine, and it always has been an important competitor with official medicine. In the nineteenth century, it was, in fact, almost impossible to tell which tradition was the official and dominant one. At present, a variety of factors, including the increasing costs of high-tech medicine, a widely expressed desire for a philosophy of healing that is more “holistic,” and ready access to many cultural traditions due to modern communication and migration patterns, have led to an efflorescence of folk medicine traditions.

The Efficacy of Folk Medicine

Folk medicine persists because people believe that it helps them. Conventional physicians often reject or even seek to eradicate folk medicine because they believe that it is useless at best and dangerous at worst. The issue of efficacy is an inevitable aspect of inquiry into folk medicine. Understandably, this question is often asked in the terms of scientific medicine: How does a particular treatment compare with no treatment (a placebo control) in a controlled trial? Although such trials have been rare in the study of folk medicine per se, some have, in fact, been conducted, and there have been other sources of scientific evidence that bear on this question. In 1785, the British physician William Withering published *An Account of Foxglove with Its Medical Uses*. This marked the entry of digitalis into the pharmacopoeia of medicine, and Withering had made his discovery through the observation of an herbalist's successful treatment of a patient with "dropsy," using an herbal tea. Furthermore, numerous scientific studies have shown that various herbal traditions contain plant medicines that have real effects against some forms of cancer.

Dietary advice with a long history in folk medicine recently has attained medical acceptance. An excellent example of this is the new medical consensus concerning the importance of fiber in the diet. This development is credited largely to Denis P. Burkitt, the surgeon whose work in Africa included definitive research on the disease that bears his name: Burkitt's lymphoma. His observations of the high-fiber diet of certain West African tribes, the decreased transit time of food in their intestines, and the low rates of certain diseases among them led him to urge an increase of fiber in the modern Western diet. This proposition now has received substantial medical endorsement, particularly for the reduction of risk for gastrointestinal cancers. However, rarely, if ever, has any medical reference acknowledged that this has been a major folk medical belief in the United States at least since the nineteenth century. As recently as the 1970s, this belief was derided in medical circles, and it is cited in many descriptions of folk medicine along with such other unconventional notions as "bad blood." More recently, in 1994, Jerry Avorn, MD, published a study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* documenting the usefulness of cranberry juice to prevent bladder infections, a long-standing folk practice. Such observations are numerous and add greatly to the credibility of natural healing beliefs and the popular idea that they are "forgotten knowledge" rather than obsolete medical beliefs or ignorant superstition.

Perhaps most surprising from the medical view, several medical journals have published randomized, double-blind studies of the efficacy of intercessory prayer, carried out at a distance. In 1988, cardiologist Randolph Byrd, MD, published a study in the *Southern Medical Journal* reporting a consistent and statistically significant advantage among seriously ill cardiac patients in a "prayed for"

group as compared to a control group. The fact that such studies are being carried out and published by medical doctors is perhaps as significant as their results.

But a consideration of folk medical efficacy cannot be restricted to medical definitions. Several researchers have reported that even when the clients of folk healers show no objective improvement in their symptoms, they often say they feel better and may say that they have been healed. Such observations indicate that folk medicine does more than address physical malfunctions. That broader effect is indicated by healing, a central concept in many folk medicine systems. Healing is one in a series of English words that have developed from the single, ancient, Indo-European root word *kailo*, meaning “whole, uninjured, or of good omen.” The linguistic descendants of *kailo* include the following: *hale* (as in “hale and hearty”), *health*, *whole*, and *holy*. The ancient connections of health with wholeness and holiness give some indication of why the connotations of healing have always been larger than those of curing or treating, to choose words more readily associated with medicine. One may or may not be made whole by being cured of a particular condition, but no cure or remedy is likely to be said to have rendered the patient more holy. Many forms of folk medicine deal directly with the metaphysical issues raised by illness and the social disruption that it often brings. So even when physical disease remains, the peace and satisfaction of having one’s spiritual welfare and one’s continuing place in the community affirmed may constitute the most personally important form of healing.

David J. Hufford

See Also Midwifery; Religion, Folk.

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Memorate

An experiential narrative, a description of a supranormal experience undergone by the narrator or a person close to him or her. The term *memorate* was introduced by C. W. von Sydow in 1934 but was later redefined for analytical purposes. As firsthand accounts, memorates provide reliable data for the scholar studying the affective experiential aspects of religion as they reveal the situations in which the religious tradition was actualized and began effecting behavioral patterns. They also give information on the social contexts of beliefs, on religious experiences, on interpretation and transmission processes, and on the society that preserves the religious traditions in question.

Memorates are regarded as having no fixed formal characteristics. One way of recognizing a memorate is through its perception of psychological authenticity: By taking into account perception and social-psychological factors, one can judge how authentically the memorate under study describes the supranormal experience.

Another useful aid to comprehending the genre is offered by content analysis. Memorates containing many unique features that are “unnecessary” and secondary from the point of view of the narration and plot are primarily “fresh” and authentic and likely to give a most reliable picture of local folk belief.

The third means concerns a detailed study of the transmission process. On the basis of in-depth research concerning memorate materials, it seems to be expedient to show the links in the chain from the experiencer to the narrator. Most memorates are either firsthand (personal) or secondhand narratives, which implies that the actual religious tradition described must be continually renewed. It also is clear that in memorates, the details describing the supranormal experience (but unnecessary from the point of view of the plot) are more sparse when there are more links in the chain and when one gets further from the place and moment of experience. Memorates can be grouped into three categories: individual (based on the narrator’s personal experience), group (family or age-group), and collective (stereotyped narratives that have been subjected to the social control of a society). The memorate describing an encounter with an unidentified supernatural being (numen) is called a numen memorate.

The part played by the tradition learned from previous generations (vertical tradition) and that learned from other members of the group (horizontal tradition) is of great importance at every stage of the transmission of a traditional message. One cannot experience or interpret an event as religious if one is not already acquainted with the religious experience and explanatory models of a tradition. A religious experience is always a question of the actualization of a belief within some supernatural frame of reference. The patterns of content, style, structure, and language, already familiar from the learned tradition, regulate oral communications in a chain of transmissions. It is through these patterns that the tradition is preserved and gradually assumes its stereotyped form. In studying religious events, there is an important problem of the processes of interpretation; these may be individual or social events controlled or regulated by individuals who exercise some kind of authoritative power in their social groups. In this way, a uniquely experienced event is partly absorbed into the traditions of the society. Studies of the preliterate stage of religious traditions presuppose that the chain through which the experience or event has been communicated is examined in detail. Each informant in the chain plays an important part, but of particular significance are the eyewitness to the event and the last informant, that is, the person who actually relates the oral message or converts it into a written form. It is at this point that the oral stage begins. The analysis of the written stage, however, is just as interesting a task as that of studying the oral process of transmission.

It is worth noting that different genres seem to transmit information about various aspects of a religion in different ways. Thus, myths, folk beliefs, and legends deal chiefly with the cognitive aspects of religion. At the same time, the

cognitive level manifests itself, above all, in rites and the ritualistic descriptions of such rituals as sacrifices, prayers, or charms.

Juha Pentikäinen

See Also Anecdote; Belief Tale; Legend.

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Memorial Shrine

Informal assemblage constructed in commemoration of sudden death in a public space. In the context of folkloristics, the concept of the memorial shrine, in contrast to structures formally erected through a religious, educational, or governmental institution, is indicated by several terms including: *improvised memorial*, *memorial assemblage*, *makeshift memorial*, *spontaneous memorial*, *spontaneous shrine*, *temporary memorial*, *vernacular shrine*, and so on. Many have pointed out the implications of each term, with care being taken to recognize the emotional investment indicated by such assemblages. Therefore, some scholars discourage the use of terms such as *makeshift*. Moreover, others question the degree to which such memorials may currently be considered spontaneous, as their appearance at sites of unexpected death and attendant characteristics are now, in the early twenty-first century, tending toward the predictable. One of the earliest folkloristic treatments of the subject was Jack Santino's 1992 examination of memorials placed at sites of politically motivated murders in Northern Ireland, which he designated *spontaneous shrines*. The usage of *assemblage* in relation to memorial shrines may also be connected to Santino's use of the term with regard to Halloween decoration in a 1986 article published in the *Journal of American Folklore*.

Just as the terms signifying these assemblages are used interchangeably in both popular and academic writing, they may be applied to a number of subtypes of constructions. These range from small groups of items around a generally two-foot high Latin cross marking the site of a fatal automobile accident, to the vast numbers of bouquets and other artifacts left at various sites in memory of a public figure, such as a politician (Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn), a member of a royal

family (Princess Diana of Wales), an actor (River Phoenix), or a professional athlete (Los Angeles Angels pitcher Nick Adenhart). The memorials often develop at the site of death within hours, but may also appear at other sites related to the life of the deceased. Memorials to Pim Fortuyn were assembled at the base of a statue of William the Silent, recognized as the father of the Netherlands, as well as in front of Fortuyn's home in Rotterdam. Memorial shrines for Princess Diana proliferated throughout the city of London, while mourners also left flowers and other mementos at the site of the fatal automobile accident in Paris. In April 2009, Los Angeles Angels fans left tributes for Nick Adenhart at the scene of the accident that killed him and three friends, and at the entrance to Angel Stadium of Anaheim. If the accident site is not accessible to mourners, a memorial may be constructed somewhere nearby, such as the memorial that developed on the fence outside a helicopter base in St. John's, Newfoundland, after a helicopter transporting workers to offshore oil platforms crashed in the Atlantic Ocean. Virtual memorial shrines are also found in various forms on the Internet, including social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook.

In addition to flowers, visitors leave a wide range of items, both sacred and secular, universal and highly individual in meaning and apparent communicative intent: handwritten letters addressed to the deceased, photographs in protective plastic sleeves, rosaries, angel figurines, candles, canned beverages (e.g., the deceased's favorite soft drink or beer), food, signed baseballs and T-shirts, stuffed animals, coins, holy cards, saints' medallions, cigarettes, guitar picks, and so on. Whether handmade or mass-produced, the items often reflect particular interests or occupations of the deceased. The memorial shrines constructed for the victims of a school shooting may include ephemera such as spirit ribbons, graduation tassels, and group portraits of orchestras, choirs, and athletic teams. As well, people may leave items that directly address the circumstances of the accident or tragedy. American flags, notes and posters bearing nationalistic statements, toy fighter planes, and other items expressing patriotism dominated September 11th shrines in both New York City and near the Pentagon, in Virginia. Similarly, memorial shrines that developed after the terrorist train bombings in Madrid featured banners used in anti-terrorism demonstrations and posters that called upon the Spanish government to be truthful in its communication with the public about the attacks. Mourners also left posters and letters that expressed solidarity with the victims and between nations in a desire for peace.

Although memorial shrines are generally initiated by someone well known to the deceased (e.g., a relative or close friend), acquaintances and strangers, such as passersby who witness an automobile accident, may also contribute items and spend time at a memorial. Immediately after an accident or murder, people may gather at a memorial shrine to express their grief and commiserate with other mourners. Individuals may also visit the memorial to see what others have left.



Kathleen Olivo of Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, who lost her sister on September 11, 2001, looks at a memorial wall in front of St. Paul's Chapel in New York City, blocks from the World Trade Center site. (AP/Wide World Photos)

This interaction between visitors and items left at the shrine—as each item contributed changes the memorial, if only slightly—has led scholars to theorize about memorial shrines' communicative and performative qualities.

Memorial shrines are temporary constructions, generally remaining at a site for a few months to a few years if the assemblage is not considered a hazard to public safety or commerce. The highest levels of re/creation and visitation generally occur right after the death(s) commemorated, and to a lesser extent on holidays, birthdays of the deceased, and anniversaries of the incident. Activity at the memorial may decrease due to the transference of material culture-centered mourning to the cemetery or home. In other cases, memorial shrine creators may fix a specific date for its termination, such as the date the deceased would have graduated from high school. However, activity at the site may be prolonged if: decorating at the cemetery is prohibited or restricted; the shrine commemorates a public figure whose burial site is not accessible to the general population; a large number of people are memorialized at the same site; the incident causing the death(s) is controversial in some way; or the shrine itself becomes a political statement. Memorial shrines constructed following terrorist attacks are examples of the latter three

conditions, although roadside memorial shrines are also a frequent focus of local or regional controversy and lead to official policy creation or change.

Some of these same conditions may also discourage or prevent a memorial shrine from developing. As a matter of policy, vernacular memorial shrines are sometimes banned by municipal or regional authorities. Death sites related to recent or ongoing political or military conflict may be considered too dangerous to visit, both physically and politically. Concerns for the maintenance of commerce near a death site may also dissuade the construction of a memorial shrine. If family and friends live far away from the site of death, the construction and maintenance of a shrine is less likely. Finally, surviving family and friends may wish to avoid the death site altogether and therefore have little or no interest in constructing and maintaining a memorial.

Considering the factors that contribute to or discourage the construction of a memorial shrine leads to contemplation of the social meanings of such assemblages. The roadside memorial tradition, perhaps one of the earliest forms of memorial shrines, developed as a material focus for prayers for the souls of the deceased, to assist those who may have been spiritually unprepared for death. Individuals interviewed regarding contemporary memorials speak of the assemblages' role in reclaiming a site that has been tainted by accidental or intentional violence. In this way, memorial shrines may function as both physical and psychological healing mechanisms. Scholarship on contemporary vernacular memorial shrines has also identified them as a way of expressing grief in a public and participatory manner, a break from the conventional Western denial of death. The interaction between people and artifacts at memorial shrines also supports the interpretation of these shrines as a new kind of mourning. Other scholars have focused on the political or more broadly social declarations communicated both by the artifacts and those who visit the shrines—statements about the dangers of drunk driving; the importance of religion, patriotism, or public safety; affection for a particular school or team; condemnation of politically motivated violence.

However, memorial shrines are not always judged positively. Some journalists and academics view these assemblages as manifestations of excessive or even pathological grief, narcissism, and consumer culture at its worst, telling the viewer more about the people that visit the memorial than those they commemorate or the circumstances that led to their death. By visiting and contributing items to memorial shrines, some argue, individuals prolong and make public emotion that has historically been expressed in more private contexts. Moreover, the accumulation of artifacts at a shrine may be interpreted as: a demonstration of consumer culture excess, a fetishistic display of consumer goods meant to rehabilitate a scarred site and assuage feelings of loss and vulnerability, as well as an element identified in the impulse to transform accident victims into heroes or heroines, regardless of the circumstances of their death. Such interpretations,

however, are often at odds with ethnographic readings of memorial shrines, as they negate the highly individual motivations that shrine visitors express verbally, kinetically, and materially. Fieldwork with memorial participants reveals the crucial role of these shrines in facilitating communication with the dead. Thus, both individuated and broad sociocultural expressions are significant in the construction, maintenance, and analysis of memorial shrines.

Holly Everett

See Also Art, Folk; Belief, Folk; Custom; Material Culture; Performance; Pilgrimage; Popular Culture.

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Metacommunication

Communication that refers to or comments on relationships among aspects of the communication process. These aspects include: speaker, addressee (i.e., the person spoken to), topic and message, contact, and code. For instance, some metacommunication refers to the *speaker's* attitude toward what he or she is talking about (e.g., “I’m serious!”) or comments on the speaker’s act of speaking itself (e.g., “I’ve just come from the dentist and am having trouble talking”). In folklore study, Richard Bauman has pointed to tall-tale-teller Ed Bell’s use of a metacommunicative aside to bridge the gap between Bell’s “real world” identity—the “I” as a narrator of events (in the quote that follows, events centering on a tree filled with honey)—and Bell’s fictional identity—the “I” as a character within the story being told: “That’s what I always think of, get some honey, you know, or get whatever’s there to be gotten.” Other metacommunication may refer, for instance, to the nature or timing of the *addressee's* response relative to the speaker’s utterances—for example: “Repeat after me . . .” or “Don’t interrupt!” Storyteller Bell used metacommunication specifically addressed to his audience (as in the phrases

“you’ve heard” and “you know”) to suggest an explanatory link between the huge tree of his story and his audience’s knowledge of large trees in the “real world”: “*You’ve heard* o’ those big ol’, uh, trees in California, *you know*, bein’ so big” (italics added). Metacommunication focusing on *topic* or *message* can deal, for example, with the contextual appropriateness of topic (e.g., “Johnny, we don’t talk about such things in public”) or with the repetition of message for the purpose of clarification or emphasis (e.g., “I said, ‘Pass the butter’”). For his part, storyteller Bell used a metacommunicative aside to comment humorously on his own ability to provide a convincing story, on the problem of whether his audience was convinced, and on the believability of the story (i.e., the message) itself: “And I don’t blame y’all if you don’t believe me about this tree, because I wouldn’t believe it either if I hadn’ta seen it with my own eyes. I don’t know whether I can tell ya how you could believe it or not, but that was a big tree.”

Metacommunication dealing with communicational *contact* between the participants can announce the opening of a communication channel (e.g., saying “Hello” after picking up a telephone receiver), or it can check whether the channel is indeed open (e.g., “Can you hear me?”). In folklore performance, a blues singer’s line, “Hear me singing to you,” refers to the singer, the audience, and the communication channel (oral channel, or singing), as well as offering a request for communicational contact (“Hear me”). Metacommunication treating *code* (i.e., a system of information) might refer to whether the participants share a particular cultural code. For example, the mother’s utterance in the following exchange comments metacommunicatively on an ambiguous message and thus on a lack of cultural sharing: Adolescent son: “That’s bitchin’ [a term of approbation], Mom!” Disconcerted mother: “What do you mean?”

Metalinguistic utterances focus on aspects of the linguistic code (e.g., grammar, lexicon, orthography). For instance, they may refer to words *as words* (e.g., “I can’t find *macabre* in the dictionary”) or to the spelling of words (as in the spelling riddle “How do you spell *enemy* in three letters?—N M E”). *Metageneric* utterances refer to conventions associated with a particular generic code. In the following catch riddle, for example, the riddler “catches” the addressee in the conventional assumption that riddlers already know the answer to the questions they pose: A: “What’s red, purple, green, yellow, gray, sky-blue, and green?” B: “I don’t know.” A: “I don’t know either, that’s why I’m asking you.”

Metanarration is metacommunication that refers to or comments on aspects of a narrative or on aspects of a storytelling event. Excerpts given earlier from storyteller Ed Bell illustrate some metanarrational functions. In addition, Barbara Babcock has distinguished two types of metanarration. *Explicit metanarration* calls attention deliberately to the narrative and/or to the storytelling event. For instance, narrative beginning and ending formulas (e.g., “Once upon a time” and “they lived happily ever after”) establish and conclude, respectively, a metanarrational

frame in terms of which the contained utterances are to be understood (i.e., as a fairy tale). Explicit metanarrative-framing utterances also include stories that contain within themselves reports of the telling of other stories, as illustrated in the narrative set of *1001 Nights*. *Implicit metanarration* operates both as part of the story (e.g., it may advance the story's plot) and as metacommunication that calls attention to the story as a story (i.e., as constructed artifice). Examples include the use of syntactic and thematic parallelism.

Alan Dundes has called for folklorists to record and study *oral literary criticism*—that is, folk performers' and audience members' own interpretations of and commentaries on the meanings and uses of folklore. Such criticism would include, among other things, a storyteller's metanarrational asides offered during storytelling as well as participants' comments solicited apart from the storytelling act itself. For example, narrator Ed Bell has commented on his rhetorical purpose in drawing out his storytelling at folk festivals. He has said that such drawing out keeps the audience in suspense a bit longer and thus makes the listening experience better.

By commenting on aspects of the communication process, metacommunication facilitates participants' understanding of communicational structure, focus, and content and gives participants the means to talk about their communicative relationships to each other and to the ongoing discourse.

Danielle M. Roemer

See Also Frame.

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Midwifery

The knowledge and practices associated with the experience of pregnancy and childbirth. Ritual birth practitioners exist in all cultures. Since birth is a complex cultural and biological process, midwifery encompasses belief systems about healing as well as medical treatment. In some societies, midwives function as an occupational group, often in conjunction with other medical personnel in the public sphere. Traditional midwives, in contrast, aid the birth process in the private realm as unpaid work or for a nominal or in-kind fee. In all cases, midwifery involves prenatal and antenatal care as well as aid with the birth process. Prenatal

practices include massage, the use of steam baths, and nutritional advice regarding proper foods and/or medicinal herbs. Assistance with birth often requires emotional as well as physical support, “catching” the baby, cutting the cord, and treatment of the afterbirth, which has sacred significance in many cultures. In caring for the mother and infant, midwives may stay with a woman for a week or more. Traditional midwives perform a wide variety of other social functions, which may include circumcision, preparation of the dead for burial, and quasi-legal services such as establishing claims of virginity or alleged rape. Despite tremendous cultural variation, midwifery practices underscore birth as a universal and often highly structured ritual in modern industrial cultures as well as in traditional societies.

Early folk medicine scholarship in the United States and Europe incorporated midwifery under studies of superstition and folk belief. At the turn of the twentieth century, a number of articles appeared in the *Journal of American Folklore* on myths, rituals, and beliefs surrounding childbirth. Early collections offer a compendium of beliefs about the evil eye, breech births, being born with a “caul,” foods to eat to avoid miscarriage, and similar topics.

Recent analysis of midwifery reflects the shift in folkloristics from collection of static phenomena and classificatory schemes to the study of dynamic processes and context. Often structural and comparative in nature, many studies contrast ethnomedical and biomedical worlds or compare midwifery as folk healing with popular and academic medicine.

Early research concentrated on folk practitioners in rural settings and among specific ethnic groups, such as African American midwives, Native American practitioners, and Hispanic women who practice midwifery as part of *curanderismo* (folk healing). Comparative studies have expanded to include the practice of nurse-midwives, who exist between the folk and biomedical worlds. A number of scholars have moved beyond particular ethnic groups to examine birth as a widespread rite of passage in technological societies.

Complementing and sometimes replacing comparative views, hermeneutic/interpretive approaches focus on the meaning of midwifery practice. In the convergence of studies of folk healing and systems of meaning, gender is pivotal. Although early studies assumed gender, it was not an analytic focus. More recent work problematizes gender, seeing midwives as *women* healers whose practice exists in a web of gender/power relations. Focus shifts to the midwife as social actor, recruitment to her role, and her place in the larger social order. Gender-focused studies also look at informal healing roles in order to include a broader range of women’s experiences and pose new questions about gender and healing. In some studies, midwives are marginal figures, mediating between public and domestic worlds and nature and culture; in others, midwives’ knowledge is central but “coded” by their subordinate position in male-dominated social worlds and medical structures.

Other works examine myths, other narratives, and broader cosmologies related to creation and procreation. These offer a movement beyond nature/culture divisions that contrast the female realm of procreation as “merely physical” with the creative realms of art and ritual that constitute culture.

Joanne Mulcahy

See Also Childbirth and Childrearing; Family Folklore; Feminist Perspectives on Folklore Scholarship; Gender; Medicine, Folk.

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Migration

The movement of people, animals, or things from one location to another. Human migration refers to the movements of people, often in large groups or along specific routes. In folkloristics, migration usually refers to human migration. Migration can refer to the movement of people from one country to another, or movements of people within a country, for example, migration from rural areas to urban areas. Motivations for migration are often economic though they can also be political or religious. Nations, towns, or communities from which migrants originate are referred to as “sending” nations, towns, or communities. The destinations or migrants are referred to as “receiving” nations, towns, or communities. “Immigration” refers to settling in another nation or area; “emigration” refers to the act of leaving one’s region of residence to settle elsewhere.

Not all migration is intended to result in permanent settlement. Workers may migrate seasonally; this is common among agricultural laborers. In early

twentieth-century Argentina, large numbers of Italian agricultural workers referred to as *golondrinas* (swallows) traveled back and forth between Italy and Argentina in order to work the harvest season in both countries. In larger, geographically diverse nations such as the United States, migrant workers travel within the country to work on the harvesting and planting of different crops. Workers may also migrate temporarily seeking other forms of employment, usually because of higher wages or availability of jobs in the receiving location. Since credit is more difficult to obtain in Mexico, for example, workers often migrate from Mexico to the United States in the hopes that higher wages will allow them to accumulate savings for large expenses such as buying a house or starting a business. A recent trend in migration is university students seeking higher paying jobs abroad; such jobs are usually only short term, lasting only during the students' break between terms at school. Even when migration is intended to be temporary, however, migrants may settle permanently into a community or nation.

Migration is not always voluntary. One of the largest forced migrations in recent history was that of Africans who were sold as slaves to Europe and the Americas during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. The Highland Clearances refers to the forced migration of highland Scots by British authorities in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the nineteenth century, indigenous populations in the United States were forced to migrate from their traditional lands to reservations designated by the United States government. The Soviet Union under the leadership of Joseph Stalin engaged in a number of forced resettlements and population transfers, usually targeting specific ethnic or religious groups.

Another common form of migration is that of refugee populations seeking escape from natural disasters such as drought or famine or political turmoil or persecution. The civil wars in Central America during the 1970s and 1980s led to a large numbers of refugees immigrating to the United States. Terrorism in the highland regions of Peru in the 1980s caused refugees from affected rural areas to migrate to urban centers.

Industrialization increased the trend of rural to urban migration within nation-states. Industrialization of agriculture meant that less labor was needed to achieve desired agricultural yields while the growth of factories in urban areas provided an increase in the number of unskilled jobs (Leeds 1971, 165–166). Rural to urban migration is also often stimulated by economic depressions or crises such as natural disasters that hinder agriculture.

The United States has defined itself as a nation of immigrants, as have Canada and Australia. In the United States, the traditional metaphor for this history of immigration has been that of the “Melting Pot”—the idea behind this being that upon arrival in the United States all cultures melded into one another to create a homogenous new identity. More recent scholarship has challenged this metaphor, arguing that ethnic groups retain at least part of their inherited identity. The first

German immigrants arrive in Topley, Canada, ca. 1910. (Corel)



major wave of European migration to the United States was one of settlement, taking place in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. These migrants were almost exclusively from Western Europe, primarily the British Isles. Studies of migration, however, have tended to focus on later waves of migration occurring in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The next major wave of migration began in the mid-nineteenth century, and though these migrants were still primarily European peasants, they became an increasingly diverse group than before, including Southern, Northern, and Eastern Europeans. The Irish Potato Famine (1845–1852) led to mass emigration from Ireland, primarily to the United States. Growing population pressures in the East and the lure of economic opportunity in the West created an internal western migration in nineteenth-century America as well. In the twentieth and into the twenty-first century, the largest number of immigrants entering the United States has come from Mexico. The United States Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) in 1986 had a significant impact on this migrant population by granting amnesty to certain undocumented migrants on the condition of continuous residency in the United States. It impacted the immigration process for both documented and undocumented immigrants (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994, xiv).

In Europe, the two World Wars caused massive shifts in political boundaries, which in turn prompted an increase in human migration. The years after World War II marked the highest point of migration within Europe since the eighteenth century (Dégh 1975, 122). The creation of the European Union has changed the

face of migration, making it simpler for citizens of member nations to migrate to other member nations. This has made it easier for migrants to return to their nation of origin rather than settle permanently in the new country. The creation of the nation-state of Israel in 1948 sparked the migration of Palestinian refugees out of Israel, and the migration of Jews from Europe, the United States, and other parts of the world to Israel. War, “ethnic cleansing,” and famine have caused large refugee migrations in Africa in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

Folkloristics has approached and incorporated migration in numerous ways. Immigrant folklore has been the subject of American folklore studies almost from the inception of the discipline. “Immigrant folklore” usually refers to the traditions and lore of more recent immigrant groups, rather than the initial migration wave of settlers. Following the migrations caused by the World Wars in Europe, European folklorists and ethnologists increasingly examined the impact of migration as well (Dégh 1975,122).

In some cases, folklore is studied with the goal of determining past migrations. Studies of folk narrative have been used in comparative mythology and the historic-geographic method, in part, to trace the movements of people through the spread of narrative. Similar elements in myth, narrative, music, or art are held up as evidence of past contacts between separate groups.

Folklorists have examined the impact of migration on aspects of traditional culture including foodways, dress, belief, speech, and music. Availability of ingredients can make continuation of migrant foodways difficult, but this sometimes leads to the creation of specific grocery stores or restaurants to service migrant populations. Such business can become important centers for migrant communities. Similarly, churches can become hubs for migrant communities, particularly when the religion of the migrant culture differs from the religion of the dominant culture. As cultures interact they absorb aspects of each others’ folklore so that immigrant groups develop a folklore that is their own, belonging neither to the sending nor receiving cultures. Ethnicity becomes a major theme, particularly in studies of international migration. Ethnic practices may be maintained symbolically as a way of maintaining differential identity and creating cohesion among an immigrant community (Dégh 1975, 115).

The concept and rates of acculturation have been a major theme in many folklore studies of migration. Linda Dégh has shown that the histories of the United States and Europe have created different patterns of acculturation. The high rate and diversity of immigration in the United States has caused less dominance of any one group, which speeds acculturation of all groups. Although immigrant enclaves are created, they usually become acculturated within two generations (1975,115). In Europe, however, migrant enclaves have greater endurance and the cultural persistence of some immigrant groups enables them to achieve the official status of national minorities (1975, 117).

In the United States, studies of immigrant folklore previously focused mostly on traditional “gateway” locations: urban centers such as New York City or the southern border states in the case of Mexican migration. Recent studies have increasingly examined populations outside of the traditional points of entry in suburban locations and throughout the country. Scholars have also looked at the impact of migration on sending communities.

Much recent folklore scholarship has also addressed the issue of gender, showing that men and women have fundamentally different experiences of migration owing to differences in cultural gender norms and the types of employment most accessible to different genders. This is further complicated by the fact that many married couples may migrate separately, with one spouse arriving sometimes decades before the other. This separation causes an impact on traditional family structure when families are reunited; gender norms, spousal relationships, and parent-child relationships may have to be renegotiated, often incorporating norms of the receiving culture (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994).

Beginning in the latter half of the twentieth century, folklore studies of migration began to shift focus away from specific items or orientation and onto the process of migration itself (Dégh 1975,115). The study of immigration networks has been essential to understanding patterns of migration. When migrants move along networks they use personal connections to find employment, housing, and community in the destination location. This provides the migrant with resources that facilitate the migration and often results in the creation of an ethnic enclave. This means that many immigrants in a particular location will not only be from the same nation of origin, they will be from the same community of origin.

Immigration narratives have been studied as oral histories. These narratives can be examined to show how knowledge is passed along regarding the immigration process with regard to tactics for obtaining visas, cultural beliefs regarding the receiving culture, and tips for adjusting to life in the new environment. Folklorists studying immigration often focus on the points of contact between immigrant groups and the host culture. Folklore related to immigration also encompasses the beliefs and attitudes of the receiving culture toward the immigrant group.

Kristina Downs

See Also Ethnic Folklore; Immigration.

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Mnemonic

Aid for memory. Many professions and academic specialties use mnemonics for teaching and remembering, and educators endorse them for classroom and other formal educational contexts. Some mnemonics, especially those in oral circulation, have currency as folklore. They may assume several forms that encourage the memorization of facts or procedures that are otherwise difficult to retain.

Mnemonics often assume the form of rhyming verse. The rhyme that begins “Thirty days hath September,” for example, helps to recall the number of days in each month. A rhyme that assists in spelling certain English words reminds us that it is “i before e except after c.” Those faced with emergency situations can remember the proper treatment for accident victims by recalling, “If the face is red, raise the head. If the face is pale, raise the other end” (alternatively, “raise the tail”).

Memorization of some facts may receive assistance from songs. Children often learn the alphabet by singing “The Alphabet Song,” for example. Setting the multiplication table to the tune of “Yankee Doodle” once facilitated arithmetic instruction in New England classrooms. Matching geographical facts to familiar tunes was once a favorite mnemonic device, and some traditional songs—such as “The Brazos River,” which lists the principal rivers of Texas—aided the memory of such information.

Less complex mnemonic devices include acronyms. The name “ROY G. BIV,” for example, enables one to remember the colors of the light spectrum. “HOMES” is a mnemonic acronym for the names of the Great Lakes. The initial letters of the words comprising certain traditional sentences may form an acrostic that recalls difficult facts: “George eat old gray rat at pa’s house yesterday” reminds one how to spell *geography*. The names of the lines on the musical scale in the treble clef correspond to the beginning letters in “every good boy does fine.” The initial letters of “my very educated mother just served us nine pickles” represent the names of the planets in order, moving away from the sun.

In addition to identifying traditional mnemonic devices of the types just described, folklore studies concerns itself with memory aids that assist the performance of verbal art. Among nonliterate groups—for example, certain Native American peoples—items such as wampum belts, carved sticks, and pictographs have assisted storytellers in recalling incidents for their narration. Singers, especially those with extensive repertoires, often maintain manuscript collections of songs to stimulate their memories. Perhaps the most thorough studies associated with mnemonics and folklore performance involve the oral-formulaic theory, which suggests that performers of long, rhythmic folklore forms such as epics or chanted sermons rely upon verbal formulas. Other approaches to the mnemonics of oral performance focus on the ways in which memory differs in oral and literate societies.

Folklore research into mnemonic devices has seldom gone beyond simply reporting them and possibly noting how their form and style help in the process of memorization. Studies of a “folk art of memory,” analogous to the techniques for memorization developed by the Greeks (which flourished as a rhetorical study through the Renaissance), provide a rich, largely unexplored research topic.

William M. Clements

See Also Oral-Formulaic Theory; Performance.

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Mobility

The principle that people, objects, and ideas are in motion, and a corresponding set of ethnographic practices and sensibilities employed by researchers to represent this complex reality.

The last two decades have witnessed an unprecedented rise in the mobility of peoples, objects, and ideas as a consequence of increasingly sophisticated

communication technologies, tourism networks, wars, and dispossession. The networks constituting our information society challenge traditional anthropological practice: Research on migrants “at home,” Internet communication, and the proliferation of special-interest communities may not require the researcher to set foot outside of her city, but necessitate more sophisticated concepts and ethnographic strategies than we have employed in the past. Urry proposes a post-disciplinary paradigm of social science research to study both human subjects and the “underlying physical or material infrastructures” (Urry 2007,19) that belie their movement in this century when mobility is central. He employs the term *mobilities* “to refer to the broader project of establishing a movement-driven social science” (2007,18) and argues for the incorporation of “everyday” activities like car driving, holiday-making, telephoning, and flying that social research has largely disregarded. The journal *Mobilities* was established in 2006 to address such issues through multidisciplinary approaches, including those of human geography, tourism, sociology, and communication. Additionally, the premise that the body’s mobility impacts subjectivity implies that identity becomes malleable, displaced, and on-the-go. The body’s movement—in both face-to-face communicative actions like gestures and mimicry, as well as in its travel to and from places—entails “shifting the gears” among aspects of one’s identity. Researchers can harness this notion of mobility by drawing on different facets of their affiliations and experiences to establish rapport and proximity with their informants.

Traditional anthropological practice has posited the scholar’s travel to distant, unfamiliar places as a “rite of passage and marker of professionalism” in contrast to locality of the informant, whose native village became an accepted unit of analysis (Clifford 1997, 21). For much of the twentieth century, evolutionary and structural-functionalist theories viewed oral and/or non-Western societies as frozen in time, immobile. Localizing culture in a delimited space and time was convenient and taken to represent a microcosm of the whole society (*idem*). At the same time, the mobility of the researcher, in terms of his or her travel from home and the university to the research site, from city to the village, has been masked. Since the 1980s, social scientists and historians have questioned the notion that culture is a local phenomenon and have devised methods to capture the complex historical and contemporary social and spatial interactions of people, images and objects, and the relationships between local and larger-than-local contexts. Folklorists have made strides toward studying this facet of mobility, albeit from the opposite direction. The discipline has long been marked by the scholarly trajectory known as the historic-geographic method, which involves mapping versions of oral narratives, technologies, and customary behaviors onto points on a map where they were found to exist and as they move across spaces, to answer basic questions about the human mind’s propensity to manifest in similar cultural

expressions across broad geographical swathes. While the movement of lore, materials, and ideas through space (and to a lesser extent, time) is at the heart of the method, it was schematic and did not account for the situated performances of narratives or customs.

The intersection of the post-spatial turn in the social sciences and as of the 1990s the “bodily turn” manifested in more reflexive research trajectories and methodologies aimed at understanding the interaction between subjectivity and the world “out there,” as well as the networks and flows of ideas, goods, armies, and migrants that animate history. De Certeau (1984) reinvigorated the study of mobility with his premise that spaces are animated by people’s activities or “spatial practices,” which must be captured in representations of a locale. Questionnaires, interviews, observation, and mapping quotidian routes are used to examine the embodied practices and navigation habits of residents in different cities. This approach harkens to earlier social theorists like Georg Simmel and Mikhail Bakhtin, whose concepts of proximity and distance in social relations in the city and in the novel, respectively, were recently taken up by social scientists. Feminist scholarship on the body has contributed to the conceptual and methodological shift from participant-observation to observant-participation: Researchers move along with people being studied to explore the role of physical motion in subjective experience, disclosing their own mobility to ethnographic sites and mimicking the motions of locals in an attempt to gain insights into their experiences of place and community. Their shared premise is that corporeality, emotion, and abstraction are intertwined in movement that embodies socially constructed cultural knowledge.

Sklar (1994) espouses mimetic bodily movement as a fundamental way of knowing and a complementary method to reading, watching and listening. She notes how bodily movement in religious rituals expresses symbols, one’s relationships to the divine and to members in the faith community, and ultimately one’s identity. Sklar employs “kinesthetic empathy,” writing of her own corporeal mimesis of worshippers in two distinct settings of religious worship: a Christian chapel and an orthodox synagogue. Similarly, Del Negro’s (2004) ethnography of an Italian town focuses on nonlinguistic behavior in the performance event of the *passaggiata*, or ritual promenade. The event includes a spectacle of gesture and comportment, dress, grooming and accessories, and their interpretation by local observers. Del Negro ties ideas about modernity and cosmopolitanism in the town to the body’s performance, which is judged according to displays of moral character, suggesting the traditional association with Mediterranean values of honor and shame. This study of expressive acts is articulated as a legacy of the folklife movement and its incorporation of performance theories. Lastly, Noy (2009) attunes to the interface between the mobility of people and objects, as well as the constant shift between roles of driver-passenger and parent-child, in experiencing of automobile travel as a family. Noy’s auto-ethnographic approach considers how we

incorporate transportation modes into our subjectivity when we operate (in) them, dovetailing into a new terrain of *automobilities*. As mobility, connectivity, displacement, and diaspora increasingly define our world, social science will continue to refine its concepts and methodologies to keep up with its complexities.

Dana Hercborgs

See Also Ethnography; Ethnology; Historic-Geographic Method.

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Modernization

Modernization is a form of social and cultural change, usually involving the rapid transition of premodern or traditional societies or the adaptation of specific cultural forms to modernity.

Modernization is closely connected to rationality, science, universalism, mass literacy, technology, industrialization, and urbanization. According to the romanticized ideas of the nineteenth century, folklore was thought to embody the premodern past and cultural specificity and to constitute a counterworld to modernity. Therefore, the fact that folklore changes, is subjected to processes of modernization, and can thus reflect modernity received attention only late, especially with Hermann Bausinger's seminal book *Volkskultur in der technischen Welt* (1961; English translation: 1990). Modernization is relevant for folklore and folkloristics in several ways.

The growing interest in folklore and mythology in the nineteenth century can be understood as a reaction to rapid modernization, rationalization, and social breakdown. At the time William J. Thoms coined the English term *folk-lore* in 1846, the material encompassed by his neologism was perceived and studied as a treasury of

survivals and relics of antiquity; “genuine folklore” could be gleaned only in remote rural areas uncontaminated by modernity. This emphasis on archaic elements placed folklore in direct opposition to modernization and even celebrated it as an antidote to its perils. In industrial societies, folklore offered a counterworld to modernization—a nostalgic realm of “wholesome” tradition, stability, continuity, orality, and authenticity, which—while serving as escape, refusal, or protest—was more often utilized for very modern purposes, such as folklorism (displaying folklore for the purposes of celebrating and preserving national identity and often to promote tourism) and fakelore (identifying and promoting as “folklore” materials that have little relationship to the processes of traditional creation and dissemination). Collecting, archiving, and preserving that which folklorists feared was soon to fall prey to modernization became the major preoccupation of folklore studies, in which anti-modernist attitudes, national orientation, and the assumption of folklore’s imminent demise prevailed for a long time.

Because of the impact of modernization, it was inevitable that the process itself became a topic of folklore. Technical innovations (such as the railroad, telephone, and automobile) and the processes of industrialization and urbanization became part of oral or printed folklore as early as the nineteenth century, so that through folklore, the modern technical world was transformed into a “natural” life world. By taking up elements of modernity; by placing legends, tales, and songs in modern (urban) settings; by addressing the problematic aspects of modernization (e.g., anonymity, moral decay, crime in the big cities, and alienating work in factories and offices); and by expressing people’s anxieties and fears (e.g. of trains, electricity, car accidents, airplanes, and computers), folklore serves the vital social function of familiarizing people with modernization and its hazards.

In a process of adaptation (which was long regarded as destructive), modernization soon extended to the contents and themes of folklore. Songs and tales, even fairy tales, incorporated elements of modern life, replacing magic carpets and horses with airplanes, messengers on horseback with telegrams, and swords with pistols. The adaptation concerned not only the material objects, the props of narrative action, but also the actions and actors, plots, subject matter, and contexts—not to mention the underlying values and worldviews. Apart from everyday narrating, the joke and the modern legend are those genres that incorporate and reflect modernity most strongly and answer the needs of modern society. Modern elements in folklore can represent a straightforward adaptation to the present, but they can also be ironic—in parodies or in literary adaptations, for example. On the other hand, folklorism—though a modern phenomenon—tends to stress archaic elements and plots.

Modernization also concerns the forms and genres of folklore. It has replaced the traditional tale of magic with the more realistic novella; the longer humorous tale (jest, tall tale) with the short, pointed joke and slur; the traditional legend

with the modern or urban legend; and the “ballad of tradition” with topical street ballads and ditties. The print and electronic media in particular have changed the forms and genres of folklore and produced new forms and subgenres, such as broadside ballads, newspaper legends, movie *Märchen*, political jokes, black humor, and Internet witchcraft tales.

Modernization has deeply affected the means and media, the performances and contexts, of folklore. Contrary to romantic ideas, literacy and print have been highly important for folklore ever since the Renaissance, through broadsides, chapbooks, dime novels, newspapers, and other reading material. In the twentieth century, electronic devices and media (the telephone, the phonograph, radio, movies, television, audio and video recorders, and the Internet) became important means of transmission, diffusion, and performance as well as of collection and preservation of folklore. Alongside festivals, exhibitions, concerts, and shows, the modern media have created new stages and contexts that allow folklore to reach larger audiences at a faster pace than ever before in history. Folklore as part of mass culture has become a public commodity that can be technically reproduced and used almost infinitely in advertising, sports, tourism, politics, and other contexts, while contents of the mass media enter everyday narrating and oral tradition. There is a permanent exchange between oral, literal, and visual representations of folklore; between tradition and modernity; and between folk culture and modern mass culture.

Klaus Roth

See Also Urban Folklore; Worldview.

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Monogenesis/Polygenesis

Origin from a single source (mono) or from multiple sources (poly), or the theory that an item has a point of beginning or origin (its genesis) and that the beginning

may have been from one single source (monogenesis) or from two or more sources (polygenesis). Drawn from the sciences and social sciences, the theories of monogenesis and polygenesis are used to explain the origin of such diverse phenomena as species, government, ethnicities, and aesthetics. In folkloristics, the theories are used to explain the origins of specific items of folklore and their variants.

Monogenesis, or monogenetic transformation, holds that for any given artifact, there is one and only one point of origin. For example, most religions hold that mankind came about as the creation of a supernatural power. From that original creation came all of the members of the group and all of the others who inhabit the earth. In the sciences, monogenesis has been used to support theories of species evolution from one common ancestor to the forms now known. In folklore, the Finnish, or historic-geographic, method of narrative research relies on the theory of monogenesis. In this method, the Ur-form, the archetype for a narrative, is the result of a conscious act of creation at a specific time and location. From this Ur-form came all known variants. For example, some scholars hold that the similarities in the creation stories of various religions point to a common point of ancestry from which all people and their religions spring. In like manner, languages are thought to have one point of origin. The group of languages classified as Indo-European is sometimes used as evidence for monogenesis of language. A few scholars hold that, given enough time and data, they can find a proto-Indo-European language from which all known languages of this stock emerged.

In 1524, Paracelsus argued for the theory of polygenesis. Using the available scholarly evidence, he posited that all the known varieties of mankind could not have evolved solely from the union of Adam and Eve. Proponents of the theory of polygenesis, or polygenetic transformation, and the allied parallel evolution hold that similar needs and development can create similar cultural artifacts in different, independent groups. Under the theory of polygenesis, the similarities in language groups or creation stories are just that—similarities. Antidiffusionist folklore scholars argue that linguistic barriers are too hard for an item of oral folklore to overcome. Instead, they believe that similar items arose in divergent language areas independently. The Swedish folklorist C. W. von Sydow held that the unique qualities of history and culture in various regions pushed the creation of similar types of tales, or regional oikotypes, each with its own unique history. Similar creation stories, under the theory of polygenesis, arose out of similar needs to explain the universe rather than out of a single point of origin.

The use of monogenesis and polygenesis as analytical tools has its merits and limitations. Certain items of folklore may be traced to an original source and support the theory of monogenesis. Other items, though similar among diverse groups and locations, are the result of similar needs and multiple creations and thus support the theory of polygenesis.

Randal S. Allison

See Also Historic-Geographic Method; Oikotype/Oicotype.

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Motif

A unit of content found in prose narratives or in poems. According to the American folklorist Stith Thompson, motifs were “those details out of which full-fledged narratives are composed.” The term *motif* came into use in comparative textual studies at the turn of the twentieth century. For the practitioners of the historic-geographic method, narrative plots (tale types) were made up of episodes and motifs.

Thompson expanded the motif’s range of meaning. He argued that some motifs, such as “Creation of the sun,” can be a narrative’s highly abstract subject or the main theme. The term *motif* also can refer to the narrative plot; the myth “Sun and moon from belly of a fish,” for example, is unit A 713.1 in Thompson’s motif-index.

Motif also can refer to a smaller narrative unit such as an episode, a sequence of several events, or a single event or action. Some of these “action motifs” can be linked to a variety of plots. An example of this kind of motif is “The obstacle flight,” whereby the fleeing protagonist throws back a brush, a stone, and a bottle of water; the objects miraculously turn into a dense wood, a mountain, and a lake in order to ensure an escape from the pursuer.

The term *motif* also has been used in reference to the descriptions of the narrative world and its inhabitants. For example, Thompson’s motif “Abode of the dead” and its realization “Land of dead across river” describe the supernatural setting of the narrative. The motif “Mermaid has white skin” refers to the physical attributes of a supernatural actor.

Thompson’s motif-index is a six-volume reference work of themes and other elements of content that appear mainly in the folklore and early literature of Eurasia. The index also includes some information on Oceanic, indigenous North and South American, and African myths and other narratives.

Thompson’s index is hierarchical: Abstract themes and broad categories (“Cosmogony and Cosmology,” “Animals”) are divided into subcategories (“The Heavens,” “The Earth,” “Mythical Animals,” “Magic Animals”). The last volume of the index contains more than 10,000 main terms.

Thompson's motif-index prevails as an effective reference book, especially for scholars of European folklore and folk belief. His way of defining the term *motif*, however, has been strongly and justifiably criticized. Thompson's *motif* is both vague and ambiguous; it variously refers to theme, plot (tale type), actor, item (object), or descriptive element. A precise application of the term requires that it refer to only one kind of unit.

As folkloristic textual analysis developed alongside narratology (i.e., the structural study of narratives and narrative techniques) in the 1960s, scholars saw that the hierarchical set of terms *theme*, *tale type*, *episode*, and *motif* was inadequate for describing a story's essential structures. New solutions and concepts were first created in the morphological and structural analyses of folktales and later in the linguistic study of narrative discourse in the 1970s and 1980s.

Satu Apo

See Also Folktale; Historic-Geographic Method; Motif; Structuralism; Tale Type.

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Mumming

Seasonal custom in which one or more disguised figures intrude into private households with the purpose of engaging in traditional, convivial interaction with the residents. Observance is invariably associated with the season of winter revels, encompassing (in Christian communities) Christmas, New Year's, and Twelfth Night. Interaction takes the form of various pastimes, many of which might figure in the revelry of a festive gathering independently of the intrusion by the

visitors—for example, singing and dancing. In late medieval and Renaissance Europe, interaction usually took the form of gambling with dice; in recent Newfoundland tradition, the pastime comprises the attempts of the hosts to guess the identity of the visitors.

Since it involves the intrusion of disguised visitors into the private space of a domestic household, the custom has particularly powerful social perspectives, with the transgressing of significant social and psychological (as well as physical) thresholds. The nature of this transgression will vary according to the ambient social conventions, as the mummers challenge whatever is normal during the rest of the year. In the comparatively homogeneous communities of Newfoundland, where neighbors normally enter a house without ceremony, the Christmas mummers (those same neighbors in disguise) draw attention to their otherness by knocking at the door as if they were strangers. In the hierarchical and comparatively anonymous society of Tudor London, in contrast, it was the prospect of strangers (by implication, individuals of lower rank) penetrating the private homes of gentilefolk that provoked legislation against mumming in disguise.

Whatever the etymology (currently disputed) of the English term *mumming* and its cognates in other languages, the terms' connotations imply, in one direction, the refusal to communicate in normal speech. Medieval mummers were silent; the Newfoundland mummers speak by breathing inward; and elsewhere, mummers are recorded as making humming noises (i.e., murmuring). In another direction, the word *mumming* implies disguise or at least a masking of the face, and in scholarship, *mumming* is sometimes used to describe customs involving disguise but within other frameworks than the house visit—a procession, for example, as in the Philadelphia mummers' parade.

On a different axis, the term can, with varying legitimacy, be extended to house-visit customs during other seasons or in which the interaction between disguised visitors and hosts involves something other than or more than a convivial pastime. Some visits seem to be designed as a courtesy to the householder, involving the expression of greetings and goodwill or even the proffering of gifts (the most extravagant and literary manifestation of this trend being the Elizabethan and Stuart court masque). In others, the visitors' motivation may focus on receiving refreshment and/or financial largesse, making their visits effectively begging visits or (in the conventional euphemism) *quêtes*. In either of these cases, the visitors are likely to entertain their hosts with a show, comprising a display of disguised figures (a fool, a grotesque female, animals), dance, song, speeches, or even a short but essentially dramatic interlude, qualifying the custom concerned as a *mummers' play*.

Thomas Pettit

See Also Drama, Folk; Festival; Mask.

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Museum, Folk

A museum devoted to the study, collection, and interpretation of materials pertaining to local or regional culture. Generally, folk museums consist of two parts: an outdoor gathering of reconstructed buildings placed in an authentic natural contextual setting and a building that houses static exhibits of folk material culture. In some countries, the term *folk museum* refers to those museums also known as “open-air” or “living-history” museums.

The rise of folk museums coincided with several trends in the middle to late nineteenth century in both northern Europe and the United States. Perhaps the most important was the growing interest in ethnography, folklore, and the study of objects within those fields of inquiry. Victorian scholars dedicated to the study of the customs of traditional groups began to examine the “objective culture” or the material world, along with their studies of more intangible features of these groups. Among the scholars who turned their attention to the study of the material aspects of local culture and played prominent roles in the development of significant museum collections were Stewart Culin, Henry Mercer, and Fletcher Bassett in the United States and Artur Hazelius and Bernard Olson in Scandinavia.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, exhibitions of arts and industries were extremely popular on both continents. From the World's Columbian



Museum of Liptov Village in Pribylina, Slovakia, 2009. (Elesuc/Dreamstime.com)

Exposition in Chicago to trade fairs in small towns, many of these exhibitions were devoted to the display of new industrial and agricultural goods. However, spurred on by widespread national romanticism, organizers also presented static displays of materials that reflected keen interests in “bygone days” or the contributions of local culture. In northern Europe, these displays often featured artifacts of the peasants or farmers. In the United States, they frequently highlighted the contributions of the immigrants to the new nation through “homeland exhibits.”

Artur Hazelius, the man credited with developing the concept of the folk museum, initially mounted an exhibition of Swedish folk arts at the 1878 World’s Fair in Paris. He sought to present a more authentic representation of Swedish culture by basing his displays on artifacts collected through extensive fieldwork and by incorporating figures “arranged in a highly emotional tableaux similar to the way it is done at a waxworks.” Upon seeing the way in which Hazelius had constructed the room settings, Bernard Olson, founder of the Danish Folk Museum, exclaimed that the exhibit “clearly sets itself apart from the rest of the exhibition with its amassed industrial wonders and trifles, manufactured for the occasion and worthless afterwards. Here was something new—the emergence of a fresh museum concept associated with a class, the life and activities of which had heretofore been disregarded by the traditional and official view of what was significant to scholarship and culture.”

Hazelius founded two museums in Stockholm—*Nordiska* and *Skansen* (literally, open-air)—that became the models for national, regional, and local folk museums around the world. At *Nordiska*, Hazelius used his vast collections of folk materials in room settings or in displays arranged systematically according to type of material, historical period, function, and geographical region. Today, *Nordiska* is home to a folklife research institute operated in conjunction with the University of Stockholm, and it hosts temporary exhibitions that interpret materials from a variety of perspectives. At *Skansen*, Hazelius brought together entire farmsteads removed from their original locations and reinstalled in one outdoor location in central Stockholm. The variety of structures represented each of Sweden’s regions, classes, and major historical periods and were placed in settings that included native plants and animals of the regions and periods. By adding traditional musicians, craftspeople, and farmers to perform and demonstrate their skills, Hazelius created the first “living museum.” There, he was able to portray regional variations in Sweden’s built environment through a variety of historical periods.

So popular was this new form of museum that major national open-air museums were quickly established in Norway (*Norsk Folkemuseum*, 1894), Denmark (*Frilandsmuseet*, 1887), and the Netherlands (*Nederlands Openluchtmuseum*, 1912), and regional museums sprang up all over northern Europe. In 1974, Adelhart Zippelius was commissioned by the Association of European Open-Air

Museums to compile a guide to 314 open-air museums in twenty-one European countries, and the model has now been adopted by nations around the world.

By the latter part of the nineteenth century, interest in the collection and display of folk material culture was also rising in the United States. In 1876, Hazelius sent six of his folklife tableaux to the United States Centennial Exposition. Subsequently, the Newark Museum in New Jersey organized a series of “homeland exhibits,” and by 1893, Stewart Culin had developed a series of exhibits on folk objects for the World’s Columbian Exposition held that year in Chicago (the Chicago World’s Fair).

By the early twentieth century, Hazelius’s model for folk museums was used to guide the development of such museums as Old Sturbridge Village and Plimoth Plantation in Massachusetts; the Farmer’s Museum in Cooperstown, New York; Mystic Seaport in Connecticut; Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia; the vast Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village in Michigan; and numerous smaller complexes across the country. All of these institutions shared the primary features of *Skansen*: the development of collections reflecting a preindustrial society, the assemblage of buildings in a re-created natural setting, and the use of costumed interpreters and craft demonstrations to selectively simulate the lives of ordinary people. In all, the pedagogical intent is clear—to give visitors an idea of life as it was lived in the past.

It is this conception of the past, however, that has proved to be one of the most difficult flaws in the formation and operation of folk museums. Folk museums have a tendency to depict generalized rather than specific experiences, to represent agricultural rather than urban life, and to deal with a historical past and not an ethnographic present. In reality, the collecting and interpretation activities of folk museums represent only very small slices of any national or regional cultural history. Folk museums generally rely on the reconstruction of a building to reconstruct and communicate information about life in a particular place in a moment in time. Yet, even undergirded with the most comprehensive of historical and folklife research, this reconstruction process will ultimately result in an interpreted re-creation or simulation of that life. The degree of authenticity achieved by a folk museum relies on both solid research and an interpretation or education staff that seeks to clearly communicate information. The best of the folk museums are those that focus on narrowly defined periods and regions, have research programs that support continued investigation on those defined periods and regions, and have well-developed educational programs.

Marsha MacDowell

See Also Folklife; Material Culture.

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Music, Folk

Tunes sung, with or without verbal texts, or played on instruments in folkloric performance settings. Contemporary perspectives stress the idea that such music, whatever its origins and previous usages, can be considered folk music when its use is primarily for the enjoyment of performers and listeners in noncommercial settings. This definition, like many recent definitions of folklore in general, stresses *behaviors* in *contexts*—in particular those that are more informal than formal—that exist outside performance settings typically associated with popular and elite or art music in Western cultures.

Earlier definitions of folk music stressed *textual* aspects. Thus, the often quoted definition promulgated by the International Folk Music Council (IFMC) in 1954 described folk music as “the product of a musical tradition that has been evolved through the process of oral transmission,” a process entailing continuity, variation, and communal selection. This definition views folk music as a special kind of text, shaped unconsciously in a Darwinian manner by a community to fit

its own needs and values. Here, melodies are considered as texts, too, and those that are transmitted aurally are privileged over sight-readable music “texts.” The formative scholarship on folk music stressed its value as a representation of a special kind of community, one imagined to exist among a homogeneous group of non-elite people within a peasant, working-class, ethnic, or regional community. These types of communities were held to be particularly important by early folklore scholars who were strongly influenced by populist cultural nationalist agendas. Thus, through processes of borrowing, co-optation, and canon formation, the music associated with non-elite communities became an important symbol of identity for intellectual elites involved in nationalist enterprises.

Consequently, folk music was analyzed in terms of musical elements thought to be characteristic of such national/communal settings. Because one type of verbal folksong text, the ballad, was recognized in the eighteenth century as having important connections with elite literature, its musical aspects received considerable scholarly attention. The ballad, as performed in Western Europe and in other parts of the world colonized from this region, was typically performed solo and a cappella. Consequently, musicologists who focused upon folksong generally concerned themselves with monophonic sound. This concern reflected, as well, the limitations of data collection in the era prior to the widespread use of sound recordings, for at that time, it was rarely possible to accurately notate more than a single line of melody. In this context, certain aspects of melody—particularly scale and, to a lesser extent, melodic contour—were thought by influential scholars such as Cecil Sharp to be diagnostic of cultural *geists* (spirits). So, for example, considerable weight was given to tunes with scales that, because they had less than a full octave or were modal rather than harmonic, might be considered to be survivals of very old music practices. Considerable attention was also paid to developing the idea of the “tune family,” utilizing selected aspects of melody for comparative analysis that paralleled the research into the history of verbal folksong texts that led to schemes of classification and typology, such as those of Francis James Child and Malcolm Laws.

The growth of the discipline of ethnomusicology in the twentieth century, coupled with the advent of convenient sound-recording technology, led to a broadening of perspective. Alan Lomax, studying the relationships between folksong style and culture, developed cantometrics, a system of analysis designed to describe recorded musical performances using standardized terminology. Cantometrics’ thirty-seven different parameters encompass a variety of factors, including: the social organization of vocal groups and orchestras, levels of cohesiveness and explicitness, rhythmic organization, melodic complexity, embellishment, and vocal stance. Lomax sought to describe aspects of *texture* as well as text.

As a descriptive system, cantometrics is much more inclusive than previous musical analysis systems, most of which have suffered from the fact that they

Lightnin' Washington, an African American prisoner, singing with his group in the woodyard at Darrington State Farm, Texas, April 1934. From the Lomax collection of photographs depicting folk musicians, primarily in the southern United States and the Bahamas. (Library of Congress)



utilize the prescriptive notation developed by Western art music, which biases the description. Lomax's analytic uses of his descriptive system, however, also have proven contentious. Utilizing Freudian ideas about human behavior, he suggested certain relationships between aspects of sound and musical organization, on the one hand, and broadly conceived cultural patterns, on the other. This reflected Lomax's own preference for theory-driven survey research rather than in-depth, data-driven field studies.

Nevertheless, Lomax's work served to broaden the scope of musical description, something that was necessary given the contemporary approach described at the beginning of this entry. Indeed, the problem folk music scholars now face is one of the boundaries of their field. Is, for example, the music made by of a group of friends who gather occasionally to play Bach or Beethoven for their own enjoyment to be considered folk music? One argument against calling such performances folk music is that in these performances the musicians intend to follow closely the composer's original score; the emphasis in folk music, by contrast, is upon a variety of intentions related to the perceived history, meaning, and uses of the music. Clearly, though, the differences between these intentions are a matter of degree rather than of opposition, for folklorists have shown that noncommercial musical traditions such as fiddling and Sacred Harp religious singing often place considerable emphasis upon the score as a document of the intention of the composer. However, such musics tend to fall outside the realm

of elite art music, which is perpetuated through formal training based not just upon scores but also upon an extensive interpretive literature.

A second parallel dilemma is raised by the fact that there are many examples of musical performance that are called folk music but that take place in commercial or formal settings. These examples may reflect an understanding of folk music in cultural nationalist terms. Or they may be using folk music as a metaphor for the values associated with informality and noncommercialism. Whatever the case, when one analyzes the musical aspects of such performances, one usually finds considerable differences, particularly in terms of textures, in comparison with the same musics in noncommercial and informal settings. So, for example, when folklorist MacEdward Leach collected “The Blue Velvet Band” from folksinger William Riley of Lance au Loup, Labrador, in 1960, Riley closely followed the lyrics and melody of the song as first recorded by its author—professional country music singer Hank Snow—in 1937. But in terms of texture, there is a world of difference: Riley sings a cappella in a rubato parlando style; Snow accompanies himself with a guitar to a faster fixed tempo. Further, Riley’s performance omits both Snow’s opening spoken introduction, which contextualizes the song as a fictional cowboy bunkhouse performance, and Snow’s closing yodel, an ornamental feature characteristic of his commercial musical domain.

This example reminds us that folk music researchers continue to focus upon issues of variation—whether in text, texture, or context—reflecting an underlying assumption that individual folk music pieces are, to a greater extent than other forms of music, constantly changing. The idea of viewing folk music as a mode of expression that frees singers and instrumentalists to re-create and improvise within the arena of a collective or shared *music-culture* (a term coined by Mark Slobin and Jeff Tilton) recalls the IFMC’s communalist definition mentioned earlier and suggests the importance of a perspective that moves beyond individual items and performances to consider entire repertoires.

Many studies of individual folk tunes exist, but folk music is nonetheless conventionally thought of in a plural sense as an aggregation of tunes. Although contemporary scholars tend to follow the strategy of viewing folk music in terms of individual behaviors in specific contexts (as suggested in the definition offered at the outset), a considerable number of those who speak of folk music think of it in these aggregational terms. It is useful to think of such aggregations as *canons*. Philip Bohlman suggests that canon formation is an essential aspect of folk music in the modern world. He offers several models of canon formation, ranging from local to national, in his discussion of the ways in which groups of people participating in folk music performances perceive their repertoire. Such canon formation is assessed critically and analytically by contemporary scholars as a source for data about the realities of folk music from a contextual point of view. Beyond this, however, it must be recognized that the entire body of writing about folk

Fiddling

Playing traditional folk music on the violin, generally without the aid of written music (although many a fiddler is musically literate to some degree). Wherever the remarkably versatile violin has traveled to play art music, from Italy to Scotland to South India, fiddling has gone too. Fiddling is differentiated from formal violin performance by customary functions, venues, and repertoires. Also, in several locations in the North Atlantic sphere, including the southern United States, playing techniques are distinctive, as are uses of the scordaturas that American fiddlers call “cross-tunings” (ones other than the usual low-to-high G-D-A-E, for example, A-E-A-E, which allows easy double-stops and maximum overall resonance in the key of A Major). In comparison to the violin, the fiddle is more loosely defined in construction materials and techniques, and, especially, in range of desirable timbres. In fact, in many times and places, the relatively nasal and penetrating timbres of fiddles have been favored because this helps the music be heard above the clatter of dancers’ feet.

Today, in North America, Britain, Ireland, and Scandinavia, fiddling constitutes the most vigorous surviving folk music. Fiddlers in the American British colonies drew especially on Scottish traditions for tunes and for ways of writing their own new tunes (playing and composing new tunes within established dance genres, then retaining each new generation’s dance types as those faded in urban popular use). In 18th-century America there was not always a clear line between violin performance and fiddling, since plenty of what were already traditional dance tunes—plus



Naomi Martin, age six, of Willmar, Minnesota, competes in the fiddle contest, August 8, 2003, at the Iowa State Fair in Des Moines. (AP/Wide World Photos)

tunes that would become traditional—were fashionable and in print, both in Britain and the United States. But during the first half of the nineteenth century, American fiddling took on an identity of its own partly due to rural fiddlers insisting on drawing idiosyncratically on repertoires that had fallen out of fashion, and partly due to the widespread popularization of blackface minstrelsy, which incorporated white performers' interpretations and caricatures of slave fiddling.

Fiddlers usually play in styles specific to the regions where they live, though those regions are more broadly defined today than formerly. 'Old-Timey' fiddlers in the Southeast still perform rustic 'breakdowns' in heterophony (approximate unison) with banjos that are played with techniques invoking nineteenth-century blackface minstrelsy (tunes such as 'Sail Away Ladies' and 'Cluck Old Hen'), while Texas fiddlers in 'contest style' vary breakdowns, waltzes, polkas, and rags systematically and virtuosically (a pair of common tunes: 'Sally Johnson' and 'Dusty Miller'). Most of English-speaking North America replicates the Texas contest model or imitates it to some degree; regional forms of the Texas-based contest style are emerging, particularly in the Pacific Northwest and in the Tennessee Valley.

Today, most fiddlers' repertoires still focus on genres of bipartite dance tunes and songs stemming from the eighteenth through early twentieth centuries, even though during the last half-century bluegrass venues and especially fiddle contests have supplanted actual dances as the focus for most public fiddle performance. These contests represent different flavors of a pan-North-Atlantic matrix of nativistic folk revivals, in which a rainbow of blends of rural and urban brands of nostalgia, the modern luxury of plentiful practice time, and adjustments made for more attentive listeners in this concert-like venue have again obscured the line between art and folk performance and between the cultivated violin and the rough-and-ready fiddle.

Chris Goertzen

music, scholarly and otherwise, constitutes the most important and influential canon that shapes perceptions about what is and what is not folk music.

Neil V. Rosenberg

See Also Ballad; Broadside Ballad; Cantometrics; Ethnomusicology; Folksong, Lyric; Folksong, Narrative.

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Musical Instrument, Folk

In their most basic denotation, traditional objects used to produce and control musical sound. Folk musical instruments are tools or technological extensions to the sound-producing capabilities and kinetic expressions of the human body. Although instruments often are viewed as distinct from the human body and voice (manifest in culture-based distinctions between instrumental and vocal musics), they effectively intensify and complement communicative facets of speech and song and the rhythmical features of movement and dance.

Comparable to distinctions between music and nonmusic, the precise factors that differentiate any sound-producing object from a musical instrument result from the beliefs and practices of individual cultures. Whatever their design—from common objects to those of elaborate construction—musical instruments generally exhibit characteristic timbres appropriate to music performance, as well as some degree of pitch and loudness variation, and they allow for the control of sound over an interval of time. Widely distributed conch-shell trumpets, the hourglass-shaped *kotsuzumi* drum of the Japanese *noh* orchestra, the African plucked lamella instrument *sanza* or *mbira*, the lute of East Asia and North Africa known as the ‘*ud*, and the mechanically bowed hurdy-gurdy from medieval Europe all illustrate distinctive sound colors and allow control of pitch, loudness, and rhythm. Such acoustical properties neither limit a musical instrument

to one use nor require that music performance be the instrument's primary purpose. Music performance may employ ritual articles, cooking utensils, agricultural tools, or any number of other objects, temporarily or otherwise. Moreover, depending upon its cultural context, distinctions between a musical use and any other use of an object need not be demarcated clearly. Although long a debated issue, African musical bows resemble hunting bows in form and suggest another purpose, as does the *ghatam* (literally, waterpot), a clay-pot percussion instrument of the Indian subcontinent.

With historical depth extending from prehistory to the present and a geographic scope encompassing six continents and nearly all societies, musical instruments challenge holistic considerations. Several cultures have developed instrument classifications to account for their instruments and performance ensembles, most notably China, which uses eight divisions based on the material that produces the sound or contains the vibrating air, and India, which has four instrument divisions organized by the sounding element. However, like the European classification with its divisions of winds, strings, and percussion (still applied to the Western orchestra), they all fail to adequately explain basics of design or to clarify relationships for the large number of instruments known today. Museum curators, instrument collectors, and scholars have sought more systematic and comprehensive means to describe and categorize the vast array of musical instruments; the standard that has emerged comes from a system developed by Erich M. von Hornbostel and Curt Sachs.

To distinguish and organize musical instruments, most systems of classification take as a fundamental principle the importance of the vibrating, or sounding, material. Drawing examples from historically and geographically disparate cultures, the Hornbostel and Sachs classification system, published in 1914 as the "*Systematik der Musikinstrumente: Ein Versuch*," follows this principle to divide instruments into four groups, based on their physical characteristics of sound production; further subdivisions are based on the form of the instrument. With some modifications and extensions, the Hornbostel and Sachs classification remains the most influential today. Its four large categories are *aerophones*, wind instruments or instruments with a vibrating column of air such as trumpets and flutes; *chordophones*, or string instruments; *idiophones*, instruments of self-sounding materials such as scrapers or bells; and *membranophones*, drums with stretched skin or other membranes.

Aerophones are subdivided into types according to the manner of producing vibration. The first group, free aerophones, consists of whirling instruments such as the bullroarer in which the vibrating air is not confined. An instrument found in ancient Greece, among aboriginal Australians, and among Native Americans, the bullroarer's thin blade of wood rotates at the end of a swung chord that excites the air to produce its characteristic roaring sound. The second group of aerophones contains those in which the air is constrained by a tube or vessel,



Two Chinese men blow their suonas (Chinese reeded horn) to accompany a group of folk dancers on a Beijing sidewalk, during the city's first snow of the winter, November 30, 1997. (AP/Wide World Photos)

with the vibration created by the breath or wind. This is a much larger group of instruments, with three further subdivisions. First, flutes consist of instruments in which the air is blown against an edge of the tube, such as with the Andean notched flute of cane, the *kena*. The next are reeds, such as the Western clarinet or oboe, in which the airstream is excited by a beating reed or reeds. The *khaen*, from Southeast Asia, is an example of a reed aerophone. Similar to the Chinese *sheng* and Japanese *sho*, the *khaen* is a mouth organ made of up to sixteen bamboo pipes arranged into two rows, each with a brass reed. Finally, there are trumpets, such as the aforementioned conch-shell trumpet or the large, wooden Swiss alphorns, in which the airstream is blown through a player's vibrating lips.

The term *chordophone* refers to instruments with one or more strings stretched between supporting structures or across a resonating body or sound box. Common examples include the guitar and Appalachian dulcimer. Although chordophones are sometimes grouped by how the strings are set in motion (struck, plucked, or bowed), they first subdivide by the shape of the sound box and neck, if the instrument has one. The simplest chordophone is the musical bow, a string stretched between two ends of a flexible stick. Some musical bows have attached resonators, such as the Brazilian *berimbau* and its small gourd that amplifies the sound of the single, struck string. Harps are plucked instruments with strings

stretching between a sound box and a straight or curved neck. The small Celtic harp, for instance, has a triangular frame, one side of which is a sound box, the other a pillar, and the third a curved neck. Strings of graduated lengths connect the sound box to the neck. Zithers, such as the Appalachian dulcimer, have strings attached parallel to the sound box. The Hindustani *bîn*, also a zither, has seven strings (three of which sound sympathetically as drones) stretched above a fretted, bamboo tube, with two large gourd resonators attached below and near the tube's ends. Lutes and fiddles have one or more strings across a sound box and a straight neck, as with the ancient Chinese *pipa*, a strummed, pear-shaped lute. The *pipa* has four strings that run from a bridge on the flat-topped sound box to tuning pegs at the head of the neck. One fiddle from Iran, more precisely a spike fiddle, is the *kamanche*. Across this instrument's neck stretch three strings played with a bow; the neck pierces a round wooden resonator, forming a spike at the end of the instrument.

Drums with stretched skins or membranes are membranophones. Various criteria distinguish the subdivisions of membranophones: whether the instrument is a percussion drum or a friction drum, the number of vibrating heads, the shape of the drum frame, the material of its construction, the manner in which the membrane is attached to the frame, and so forth. Examples of percussion drums—those struck with the hand, sticks, or something else—include *kalangu* and *kendang* drums. The *kalangu* of the Hausa of Nigeria is a kind of talking drum, a double-headed, hourglass-shaped drum laced so that, when squeezed, its pitch changes. Another example, this one from Indonesia, is the *kendang*. This is the laced, double-headed, barrel-shaped drum of the Gamelan orchestra. The *kendang* derives from the South Indian *mrdanga*. The *cuíca* is a friction drum from Brazil played with a stick attached to the membrane and rubbed with wetted hands or a damp cloth to create its sound.

Idiophones are instruments that produce sound by the material of their construction, without the addition of strings or membranes. Structural features of idiophones do not distinguish subcategories, as with the other divisions. Instrument shape has little significance for the subdivisions of idiophones; rather, playing techniques subdivide the group: by concussion, striking, stamping, shaking, scraping, friction, or plucking. The number of instruments that fall within these various subdivisions is immense. A few illustrative examples include: the solid-body concussion sticks, or *claves*, of Latin America; the struck, fixed-keyed xylophones, such as the *balo* of West Africa and the *marimba* of Guatemala; the *ganbo* stamping tubes of Haiti; the *angklung* rattle of Java and Bali (played by shaking its sliding bamboo tubes); the scraped African American washboard; the tortoise-shell *áyotl*, a friction idiophone of the Maya-Quiche of Central America; and the plucked lamellaphones or *mbiras* of South Africa and *sanzas* of Cameroon, which consist of sets of graduated metal tongues on boards or sound boxes.

The large-scale classification of musical instruments attests to the wide range of instrument designs while giving insight into commonalities of acoustical/physical features. Musical instruments, however, exhibit more properties than classification alone suggests. Isolated, classification does little to show the historical and cultural import of an instrument, its musical function within performance, or its social functions.

At an intersection of artifact, behavior, and belief, a musical instrument carries significance and meaning beyond its physical characteristics. Garnered from a society's material and ideological resources, musical instruments are often viewed as technical achievements, celebrated for their beauty of workmanship and renowned for their quality of sound. More significantly, musical instruments exist as complex cultural phenomena that resonate with a society's history and beliefs and its perceptions of music and music making. The ways instruments connect and merge with a society are myriad. John Baily, for example, relates how changes in a musical instrument of Afghanistan, the Herati *dutâr*, reflect pressures to include music from outside its traditional repertoire. These changes—most fundamentally seen in the addition of more strings to this long-necked lute—correlate to changing political alliances within and outside Afghanistan and a shift, for musicians and audiences alike, from lives focused on rural activities to more urban ones. From the Solomon Islands, Hugho Zemp explains that the basis of 'Are'are music theory—the notion of melodic interval—derives from the different lengths of tubes within bamboo panpipes and panpipe ensembles. In another example, Thomas Turino demonstrates how the performance of the *charango*, a small lute with a sound box often made from an armadillo shell, carries an essential role within courtship in the Peruvian province of Canas. Drawing upon the power, beauty, and music of the mythological *la sirena* (the mermaid), young males use the *charango* in courtship to signal intent, make contact, and ultimately woo young women. And as a final example, the performance of a Javanese *gamelan*, an ensemble of mostly sets of tuned gongs, corresponds to the interlocking cycles that delineate the lives of the Javanese. Briefly, *gamelan* music is organized around a recurring melodic/rhythmic cycle built in successive layers of sound from low to high, from larger gongs to smaller ones, with the melodic/rhythmic complexity literally doubled at each layer of sound. According to Judith Becker, these gong cycles from the *gamelan* orchestra show an isomorphic relationship to the way in which time is represented in Java, as overlapping simultaneous cycles in which smaller cycles move within larger ones. Such examples affirm that, more than just integral to music and musical behavior, musical instruments exist as a fundamental part of the human condition.

Leslie C. Gay Jr.

See Also Ethnomusicology; Folksong, Lyric; Folksong, Narrative; Music, Folk.

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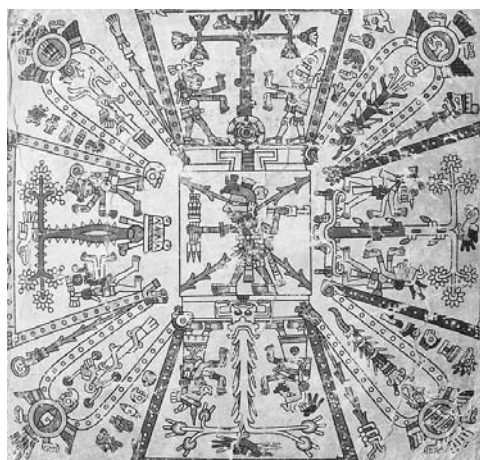
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Myth

Narrative of cultural or religious beginnings. Myths refer to beginnings, in a sacred sense, and their definitions and analyses have plagued and fascinated folklorists and other scholars for centuries.

The brothers Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm, best known for their collections of *Märchen*, or fairy tales, were scholars who wanted to demonstrate that (German) national character was embodied in the folklore of a people. They distinguished

Mixtec creation myth showing the fire god at the center of the universe being fed the blood of sacrifice, which emanates from the head, hand, leg, and ribs of the god Texcatlipoca. (Werner Forman/Art Resource, NY)



among myth, folktale, and legend, as have many other scholars in several parts of the world.

The eminent Austrian psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung, who worked in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, proposed that myth arises from the collective unconscious—that portion of the unconscious mind common to all human beings. In his formulations, myth shares common archetypes (or deeply and mentally embedded recognizable patterns) with dreams and other workings of the unconscious. Archetypes are to psychological processes as instincts (such as sucking) are to physiological ones. It is the archetypes, Jung advocated, that account for commonalities in mythic stories and events that are seen across cultures and time periods.

Others, such as Max Müller (who worked in Great Britain in the middle and latter parts of the nineteenth century), have believed myths to be metaphors for processes of nature. For example, Müller, a Sanskrit scholar and comparative philologist, believed that the folklore and especially the mythology of his day in England were the survivals of a presumed Aryan past, which he thought retrievable through careful comparisons of languages, beginning with Sanskrit. He noted similarities among the metaphorical names of the ancient gods of ancient civilizations from India to Greece to Rome. Through what he termed the “disease of language,” processes of forgetfulness, and improper translations, myths were coded metaphoric mnemonics not only for the gods and their actions but also for the natural processes of the world, especially the movements of the sun. He believed that myths arose when people were capable of reasoning but not capable of very abstract thinking. Both a number of words and a particular god, he suggested, could symbolize one natural process: the movement of the sun through the day and year. Thus, for Müller and others who reasoned in a similar vein, myths were metaphors that, through time, lost their original meanings and became entities that

seemed to stand for themselves. Only scholarly, comparative linguistic work could unravel the mysteries of which gods stood for which natural phenomena.

Franz Boas, credited with establishing the study of anthropology and mythology in the United States, saw all folklore as mirroring culture, both in what is allowed and what is prohibited. He specifically stated, in 1916, that the thought processes leading so-called primitive man to concoct myths were the same processes that modern man used. (It was the fashion of that day to speak in terms of “man” and “men” to mean “people.”) He prefigured arguments Claude Lévi-Strauss would make thirty years later.

In 1965, William Bascom published a proposed solution to the definitional problem. His definition has both formed the basis for acceptance of a narrative as myth and served as the beginning point to argue against classifications of myth. It was his intention to provide analytic constructs—for myth, legend, and folktale—that had cross-cultural validity.

Bascom considered myth to be a form of prose narrative, believed to be true by the members of the society whose culture holds the myth. Bascom further noted that myths deal with events of the remote past from a world that is different from or earlier than the one in which the myth is related; myths have a sacred component (if they are not considered to be totally sacred), and they have mostly nonhumans as principal characters. He also maintained that, though there are many fewer myths present in any given culture than there are folktales or legends, the myths are held to have importance exceeding their numbers in that they are sacred and provide the rationale for existence and ways of doing things within the culture. Finally, he said that myths have explanatory and etiological functions.

In Bascom’s cataloging of societies and cultures from around the world, he noted that it was often difficult to use an ethnographer’s or folklorist’s work on myth or narrative in general because the researcher had not included sufficient information on belief in the generating group. Therefore, it seems that the issue of belief was key for Bascom. He did note that the categories of myth, legend, and folktale were often collapsed in some cultures but added that, since his definition was part of an analytic scheme imposed from outside the culture, the people’s own categories were not important for purposes of analysis and comparisons by outsiders to the culture.

Recently, Claire Farrer proposed a term—the *mythic present*—in an effort to characterize to Euro-American students and scholars the attitudes most Native Americans have toward the time element in myth. Although some of Bascom’s criteria for myth hold true for Native Americans and their mythology, there is a collapse of time in Native American society that does not conform to Euro-American understandings of the various phenomena of time. Specifically, that which is known to have occurred in the long-ago past (often expressed as “when the world was in the process of being made”) is conflated with that which is occurring now, at this moment, in our own time-space: This is the mythic present.

Some other researchers, particularly those who work with Native Americans, have found difficulties with Bascom's categories because myths are not always prose narratives and because the issue of time is not so clear-cut as Bascom proposed. Oftentimes, myths are in poetic language and follow the canons of poetics for the culture in which the myths are present. Both Dell Hymes and Dennis Tedlock are credited with forcing folklorists to recognize the poetic structure not only of myths but also of other forms of narrative through their insistence that rendering the narratives of other cultures in prose, rather than seeking to present them in the manner in which they are spoken, robs those narratives of their poetic structure and power. Their work demands careful typesetting and reading in order to assist a reader in appreciating the quality of the spoken, in contrast to the written, word.

A cross-culturally sound and minimal definition of the term *myth*, as distinct from other forms of narrative, is that it is sacred narrative that is most often believed to be true. Because myth is of such a sacred nature, many people object to the very word *myth* when it is attached to their own sacred narratives. For those in whose culture the myth is embedded, the truth of the myth may be literal or figurative. Literalists believe fully in the absolute truth of myth, whereas figurativists believe in myth as metaphor.

For example, believing Jews, Christians, and Muslims who consider themselves to be fundamentalists assert that the biblical Genesis is literal truth: Yahweh/God/Allah created the world and universe in which we live in six of our experienced days (twenty-four hours, more or less) and rested on the next, the seventh day.

By contrast, believing Jews, Christians, and Muslims who consider themselves to be less doctrinaire assert that the biblical Genesis is to be understood as a metaphor: Yehweh/God/Allah created the world and universe in which we live in six episodes called "days" that do not correspond to our experience of days; further, the creator (whatever name is given in the particular culture) inaugurated a pattern of alternating work (creation and creative effort) and rest.

This latter view of Genesis as metaphor allows for accommodation between religion and science in that the biblical Genesis of separation of light and dark, water and firmament, with the further differentiation of species culminating in human beings, follows evolutionary theory precepts as well.

For some people, the very words of myth are in themselves sacred. Even to utter such words is to call into presence, if not being, the referent. For example, recitations of the "beginningtime" by Mescalero Apache religious specialists are done in vernacular Apache or in English on most occasions; only during important ceremonies is the ritual language used, for that language had its own genesis in the "beginningtime" and, therefore, is intrinsically powerful. When speaking in the ritual language, religious specialists are extremely cautious, obeying many injunctions, speaking only in allusion and metaphor, and explaining to the powers

that be that they are welcome among their people once again, for the speaking of them in the ritual language—the language of myth—calls them and demands their presence. It is also this power of word in sacred context that gives rise to the mythic present, the re-creation of mythic past in contemporary time and experience. By such a process of speaking/calling into being, myth is accorded an importance not only in the long-ago past but also in the here and now.

The power of the word was used very effectively by a mesmerizing speaker, the late Joseph Campbell. During the 1980s, no one was more closely associated with myth in the popular mind than Campbell. Not only a captivating speaker, he was also a fine storyteller, whether in lectures or on television. In general, Campbell's approach to myths and mythology (the study of myths) was a universalist one. He maintained, much as had the psychologist Jung before him, that myths embody the same stories for disparate cultures and that they were retellings of each other; his data were garnered from pieces of myths taken out of context from many narrative traditions. Because of his selective comparisons, he is usually not granted much scholarly credence. His lack of analysis of complete myths in their appropriate contexts has lessened his credibility, especially among folklorists and anthropologists.

Yet there is a certain appeal to a universalist explanation of myths. The French scholar Claude Lévi-Strauss is perhaps the best-known scholarly student of the world's mythology; although, if the truth be told, most of his data are from Native American sources in all the Americas. Lévi-Strauss has reached his audience primarily through the written word rather than through visual media. But, like Campbell, he has been roundly criticized for taking material out of context and comparing what may roughly be termed apples and bricks. However, in Lévi-Strauss's rationale, the lack of contextualization is permissible since he avers that all myths, wherever they are found, share a common structure that he has reduced to an algebraic formula. He also maintains that myths are binary structures, setting up and resolving contrasts and contradictions within the culture and society. For Lévi-Strauss, the universalist position is an acceptable one since all people in the world share common brain structure—structure that he sees replicated in myths. Therefore, myths become both good to think and a reflection of the thought process itself. His is a complex argument, and it often seems that no one can utilize the Lévi-Strauss analytic technique quite as well as can Lévi-Strauss.

Alan Dundes, a contemporary folklorist, also has devoted considerable effort to the analysis and explanation of myth. Rather than a universalist approach, however, he utilizes a neo-Freudian schema for analysis, finding that myths (products of adult minds, he avers) are one of the adult projective systems. As such, they are universal, in that all adults around the world use projective techniques that often are expressed in myths. Whereas followers of Jung maintain that archetypes are the same throughout the world, followers of the Freudian analysis

of myth maintain that the symbols found in myth will be culturally relative but nonetheless a projection of infantile and child socialization systems. Many non-Freudian-oriented scholars marvel at the number of times neo-Freudians, such as Dundes, find that the myth under analysis has a sexual component somehow related to toilet training and Oedipus or Electra complexes.

The links among symbols and myths, myths and rituals, and heroes and myths also have been explored. Similarly, the syntagmatic (ordering) and paradigmatic (substituting) aspects of myth have been of interest to scholars. In the latter part of his career, the late Edmund R. Leach, a British social anthropologist, turned to a consideration of Christian and Jewish myths. Utilizing biblical myths, he demonstrated the redundancy in myth, maintaining that the episodes within myths make the same essential point or points over and over again as a means of reinforcing the importance of the message. His work has been said by some to be both a distillation and an extension of that of Lévi-Strauss, although Leach did not make claims to the universality of myth messages in general. But it was his earlier work that had a greater impact on those who study myth, for he demonstrated how myth is fluid, rather than being fixed for all time, in his discussion of the manipulation of myth and genealogy to reinforce land claims or settle other political issues.

Indeed, the permeability of myth is one of its essential characteristics. If myth, once constructed, were immutable, it would soon lose its value for people since it would not be able to accommodate changes in culture or the society's knowledge base. Myth lends itself to reinterpretation, but myth also adjusts to incorporate the new as well as celebrate the old—at least in the societies where myth is alive in verbal tellings and not subject to the orthodoxy that accompanies the fixing of myth in writing. In the 1960s, LaVerne Harrell Clark provided examples of myth's permeability through a study of how horses, a late postcontact phenomenon, were thoroughly incorporated into Navajo and Apache narrative.

Most folklorists and anthropologists continue to consider myth in its cultural context rather than simply as literature or philosophy. Sometimes, it has been the fashion for myth to be termed a mirror of culture, and at other times, it has been fashionable to subject myth to computer analyses. At still other times, myth has been pointed to as the philosophy of the unlettered, completely ignoring that the lettered also have and believe in their own myths. What is enduring is myth itself. It does not vanish with increased complexity of social life. Worldwide trade and politics do not cause it to wither and die from lack of use. It can stand—indeed, it has stood—scrutiny as metaphor, as literal truth as well as a synonym for untruth, as lessons for life, as components in an algebraic system, as manifestations of psychological processes, as exemplar of properness and simultaneously as warning of the consequences of impropriety, as philosophy of the Other, as engaging literature, as being universal as well as being particular to a group of people at a

specific time. Whatever else it may be, myth authorizes the present in terms of the past. Myth, quite simply, is.

Claire R. Farrer

See Also Anthropology, Symbolic; Comparative Mythology; Cosmology; Culture Hero; Hero/Heroine, Folk; Myth-Ritual Theory; Religion, Folk; Ritual; Romantic Nationalism; Structuralism; Trickster.

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Myth-Ritual Theory

Primarily, a critical approach to literature that was influential in the English-speaking world during the first half of the twentieth century and that sought to uncover prehistoric ritual forms or patterns underlying literary works. Its germ is to be found in the work of the Scottish historian of religion William Robertson Smith (1846–1894), who, in *Religion of the Semites* (1890), asserted that what mattered most to the ancient worshipping community was action rather than belief, the correct performance of ritual rather than intellectual acceptance of creedal myth. This insight was developed at length by a group of British classical scholars at the turn of the century who were seeking the formal origins of Greek tragedy. This group, usually called the “Cambridge Ritualists” because all but one (Murray) were Cambridge dons, was comprised of Jane Ellen Harrison (1850–1928), Gilbert Murray (1866–1957), Francis Macdonald Cornford (1874–1943), and Arthur Bernard Cook (1868–1952). The well-known historian of religion James George Frazer (1854–1941), influenced by his mentor Robertson Smith, was sympathetic to myth-ritualism early in his career and definitely influenced the Cambridge Ritualists’ work, but he soon disavowed the theory and its partisans and returned to a rationalism that he found more congenial. By 1921, his antipathy had grown so great that in the preface to his translation of the ancient mythographer Apollodorus’s collection of myths called *The Library*, the normally unpolemical Frazer went out of his way to attack myth-ritualism.

Myth-ritualism is a collectivist and irrationalist explanation of the origin, development, and meaning of myth and ritual, and as such, it represents a deviation from the main line of British theorizing, which has always emphasized the individualist and intellectualist aspects of religion. From the moment of its enunciation, myth-ritualism has been controversial, and even in its heyday, it never appealed to more than a small number of scholars and literary critics. The main reason for this antipathy among classicists, historians, and folklorists always has been the quality of the evidence that its advocates have been able to marshal. Because (the theory goes) the forms that have come down to us in ancient literary texts derive from prehistoric rituals, which by definition are inaccessible, most of

the data illustrating the argument have been (and have had to be) inferential and comparative, drawn from the behavior and beliefs of so-called primitive peoples who became known to Europeans during the imperialist expansion of the nineteenth century and who, it was claimed, stood at the same stage of mental evolution as did the peoples of classical antiquity. Generally speaking, scholars in disciplines with historical methodologies have regarded such evidence as excessively speculative and have refused to make the intellectual leaps that are often called for by myth-ritualists.

From the point of view of the history of ideas, myth-ritualism was part of the wave of irrationalist thought that crested throughout Europe just before World War I. The movement passed through two phases. The founding generation, the aforementioned Cambridge Ritualists (1890–1914), analyzed Greek drama (both tragedy and comedy) and found its “deep structure” to consist of a ritual pattern of death and rebirth based ultimately on the reconstructed stages of the Dionysian mysteries. In a series of publications leading up to Harrison’s *Themis* (1912)—a volume that included chapters by Murray and Cornford—the group, led by Harrison and basing itself on the anthropology of J. G. Frazer, the vitalism of Henri Bergson, and the sociology of Émile Durkheim, turned away from the traditional image of the bright, shining Greeks and instead presented them and their religious belief and behavior as essentially “primitive.” By the late 1920s, most classicists had, in turn, dismissed the Cambridge Ritualists’ general theory of Greek religion and their specific analysis of the historical and formal origins of drama. By then, however, the theory had already been picked up elsewhere in the intellectual world, most notably by biblical critics (among whom it was in vogue in Scandinavia from the late 1920s through the 1940s) and especially by English-speaking literary critics.

Although a few scholars (such as the Marxist classicist George Thomson) continued to embrace myth-ritualism, the second phase of myth-ritualism (1930–1965) was essentially literary-critical. During those years, a number of critics rejected the classicists’ rejection, simply assumed the correctness of the Cambridge Ritualists’ method, and proceeded to apply it to postclassical texts, mostly dramatic but also including medieval poems, folk ballads, and novels. As time passed, myth-ritualism, when used at all, was increasingly encountered as only one element in a complex critical approach. The most notable critics associated with the second phase were the Americans Kenneth Burke, Francis Fergusson, and Stanley Edgar Hyman and the Canadian Northrop Frye. When the members of this second generation died or became inactive, no successors emerged. Perhaps because it was essentially a formalist method, myth-ritualism seems to have died unnoticed and unmourned in the mid-1970s, as the energy and attention of literary criticism in North America turned toward politics, in the forms of poststructuralism and especially deconstruction.

Robert Ackerman

See Also Evolutionary Theory; Myth.

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N

National Folk Heroes

Often synonymous with culture heroes and heroines, national heroes are those figures who are widely considered by the members and government of a nation-state to be especially outstanding. They tend to have a strong presence in the formal apparatus and activities of government, especially in education, civic observances, and public holidays, and in statues, place-names, and other public memorials. They may also feature in official national projections and expressions, on postage stamps, for instance. While the status of these figures as folk heroes is sometimes uncertain, depending on political and social circumstances, they may have a purchase in the popular consciousness and feature in folk expressions.

In some cases these heroes are historical figures, like the English Alfred the Great (849–899) or the American Betsy Ross (1752–1836), designer and maker of the American flag, the “Stars and Stripes.” In other cases, they are legendary figures or icons, such as the American Uncle Sam.

National heroes, historical or not, may be stereotypes of national characteristics, real or imagined. The figure of “the jolly swagman” in Australia, for instance, is representative of the pioneering, antiauthoritarian values many Australians consider to be part of their national identity. Australia is perhaps unique in boasting as a national hero the figure of Ned Kelly, a bushranger or outlaw hero who murdered three policemen and robbed banks. More often, national heroes are associated with resistance to foreign domination. Typically such heroes are warriors who fight valiantly and cleverly, heroes of struggle who represent their people in their hour of need. Some examples of this type include Rákóczi of Hungary, Holger Dankse of Denmark, and El Cid of Spain.

Wars are often the source of national folk hero stereotypes, which include the American “doughboy,” the British “tommy,” the French “poilu,” and the “digger” of Australia and New Zealand. Such generic figures, all male, have a good deal in common with the warrior hero as well as with the culture hero. National heroine types exist in the figure of the nurse, the mother who weeps and waits, and the brave young woman who prefers death to sexual capitulation, as in the story of the Serbian heroine Dojrana.

National heroes are frequently the “discoverers,” claimers, and explorers of New World nations. Thus Christopher Columbus has this role in the United

Yankee Doodle

The earliest reference to the well-known ditty and its eponymous hero seems to be in a Boston periodical, *Journal of the Times*, in September 1768, though the tune, at least, was apparently well known for some time before this date. Various claims for the origins of the catchy tune (which was used by both the British and American sides during the War of Independence) and words have been made, and there are many different versions of the lyrics. Yankee Doodle's reported exploits, the best known of which is to "stick a feather in his hat and call it macaroni," are whimsical rather than heroic.

The term itself originally referred to a person from the New England states and was used by the Confederate forces in the Civil War as a slur against the Union side. As often happens in such cases, the Yankees took up the insult and wore it as a badge of pride, further developing the character into something of a roguish trickster figure. As is usual with such widely known and culturally significant names, its origins are the subject of considerable folk etymologizing. There are claims for a Native American origin and, perhaps more likely, for an origin in the nicknames Dutch settlers gave their English neighbors in the New England region. Over time, the name "Yankee Doodle" became synonymous with the national spirit and identity of the United States and came to personify the American way, both at home and abroad.

Graham Seal



Cover of *Yankee Doodle Children's Book*, published by McLoughlin Bros., New York, NY, 1880. (Transcendental Graphics/Getty Images)

States of America, while Captain Cook has it in Australia. Such figures, as well as other types of national hero, are frequently held in high esteem as representatives of national identity, actual or imagined.

Heroes who have been chosen or developed as national figures are often said to be sleeping until their nation needs them once more. The king of Spain who died in 711, Roderick or Roderigo, was the last of the Visigoth monarchs. He was killed by the North African Muslims under Tariq ibn Ziyad and became the center of numerous legends. In some stories, he ends his days as a hermit, devoured by snakes, and in others he is a sleeping monarch, waiting to come again in the time of his country's need.

The processes by which real and mythic folk heroes become national heroes are generally complex and of considerable historical duration. These processes involve an ongoing and often intense interaction between the folk traditions that celebrate such figures and their representation in nonfolkloric form, including formal art, literature, and popular culture.

Graham Seal

See Also Children's Folk Heroes; Hero/Heroine, Folk; Local Heroes; Occupational Folk Heroes.

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Neck Riddle

A genre integrating traditional enigma and narrative. The neck riddle is usually thought of as a riddle told by the hero of a tale, either to win the hand of a princess (AT 851, "The Princess Who Cannot Solve the Riddle") or to save his neck from a sentence of death (AT 927, "Out-Riddling the Judge"). The riddle also contains a narrative. Its solution lies in the recent experience of the hero. Since the experience is private and always of a bizarre character, the princess or the executioner is unable to solve the riddle, and the hero triumphs. For example, the

hero (like the biblical Samson) has seen a bird's nest or beehive in the carcass of an animal:

Ten tongues in one head,
 Nine living and one dead;
 One flew forth to fetch some bread
 To feed the living in the dead.

Other neck riddles have to do with inversion—a man walking under gravel and on top of leaves, a daughter suckling her father—or more explicitly with incest, as in the Greek romance of Apollonius of Tyre, the source for Shakespeare's *Pericles*. Still other grotesque solutions relate to posthumous birth, dismembered bodies, or poisoned meat.

Many commentators have remarked upon the relationships of neck riddle themes to the imagery of carnival as described by Mikhail Bakhtin. Unlike the true riddle, which describes ordinary things in unexpected language, the neck riddle uses simple language to speak of the most shocking fusions of incompatibles: parent and child, life and death. Its challenging of culturally decreed separations reinforces the action of the frame narrative, in which a structurally weak challenger gains power over the powerful by the use of wit.

Recent scholarship has addressed the generic status of the neck riddle. John Dorst proposes that the neck riddle is not a stable genre but “an arena of intergeneric conflict” in which narrative and riddle struggle to impose their respective orientations on reality. Thus, the atemporal compression of the riddle reduces the narrative solution to a static tableau, but the narrative's unfolding in time opens up the riddle to the instabilities of experience. As Dorst notes, the same material emerges as narrative and as riddle in the West Indies. Seizing the West Indian examples, Roger D. Abrahams points out that there, as in other creole cultures, the neck riddle's generic flexibility is more the norm than the exception. Perhaps the neck riddle, and not tightly framed European genres such as the “true riddle,” should be our model and point of departure in examining the history of folklore forms.

Dorothy Noyes

See Also Enigma, Folk.

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Night Hag

A phenomenon during which an individual senses the presence of a malevolent agent, is unable to move, is consciously aware of their surroundings, experiences a sense of fear or dread, and often feels a pressing or strangling sensation. In addition to these core elements, auditory and visual hallucinations and respiratory difficulty are common. The attack terminates when the victim is finally able to move. Traditionally, the word *nightmare* is used to describe this phenomenon. *Nightmare* comes from the Anglo-Saxon *neaht* or *nicht* (night) and *mara* (incubus or succubus). *Mara* is the agent form of the verb *merran* and literally means “a crusher.” Because *nightmare* is commonly used to refer to a “bad dream,” folklorists employ more restrictive terms, such as *night hag* or the terms used by the group under study, to refer to the syndrome.

The night hag has been documented throughout history and in a variety of cultures, suggesting a universal distribution. Victims of classic hag attacks wake to find themselves paralyzed, with a malevolent form astride their chests attempting to strangle them. Many cultures have an established interpretation that categorizes the classic form in particular. Representative examples are *augumangia* and *ukomiarik* (Eskimo), spirit possession that occurs while the soul wanders during sleep; *dab tsog* (Hmong), nocturnal pressing spirit; *cauchemar* (African American French-Catholics in Louisiana), a spirit that “rides” the victim; witch riding (Europe, Colonial America), oppression by a witch “riding” the victim to the witches’ sabbath; and *kokma* (St. Lucia), the spirit of a dead, unbaptized infant who attempts to strangle the victims while sitting on their chest. Many traditions maintain that a night-hag attack can result in the victim’s death if the attack is not terminated soon enough. In communities where attacks are attributed to witchcraft, a protective cutting instrument (e.g., razor, knife, shears, scythe) placed under the pillow or bed of the victim is believed to injure or kill the attacker, thus revealing the perpetrator’s identity.

Individuals in groups that lack a folk taxonomy for the attack must rely on worldview, personal beliefs, and personal experience for interpretation. This results in idiosyncratic explanations. For example, many Americans familiar with the stories and images of unidentified flying objects (UFOs) and extraterrestrial beings prevalent in popular culture have interpreted hag attacks as abduction by creatures from outer space.

The Greek physician Galen (CE 130?–200?) diagnosed the night hag as a symptom of gastric disturbance, providing one of the earliest recorded medical references to the syndrome. This explanation persists today in the popular belief that attributes bad dreams and nightmares to “something I ate.” Physiologically, the night hag occurs when symptoms of the rapid eye movement (REM) stage of sleep, specifically the suppression of muscular activity and characteristic brain

activity, intrude upon either the hypnagogic (falling asleep) or the hypnopompic (waking) phase of sleep. Recent research indicates that the night hag may play a role in the sudden unexpected nocturnal death syndrome (SUNDS) afflicting Hmong refugees in the United States.

Leah Carson Powell

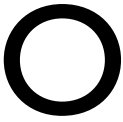
See Also Assault, Supernatural.

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Obscenity

An act or expression that transgresses a culture's ordinary norms of social decorum. Obscenity may take the form of a word (e.g., *fuck*), a gesture (e.g., "flipping the bird"), an artifact (e.g., a tattoo, graffiti), a concept not normally mentioned in polite conversation (e.g., impotence), or a behavior (e.g., oral sex). Although by definition transgressive, obscenity is often shaped by tradition; in fact, most cultures include recognized means and occasions for the performance of obscene behaviors. Since identification of obscenity is based on prevailing social sentiment and judgment at any given time, precise definitions vary from group to group within a culture and may show marked alteration over time as well.

Within the folklore of Europe and America, obscene humor plays an important, if sometimes obscured, part, especially in certain genres, such as the folksong (particularly the ballad), folktale, and riddle. In these cases, obscenity often consists of scatological humor, sexual innuendo, and references to castration, impotence, sexual appetite, bestiality, and stamina or capacity. Many genres, such as riddles, possess both obscure and innocent answers, allowing the performer to suggest obscene topics while claiming innocence. For instance, a Finnish riddle asks what swells when held in the hand. The innocent answer—a ball of yarn—elicits laughter and embarrassment when compared to the implied but unspoken answer—a penis. Other genres, such as folksongs, sometimes substitute sound-alike alternatives for expected obscene words, creating a similar tongue-in-cheek humor that suggests but does not fully employ obscene material. In other cases, however, such as some folksongs, folktales, graffiti, jokes, and toasts, the item of folklore may prove openly bawdy, describing normally taboo subjects in great detail and with great gusto. Good examples are ballads such as "Our Goodman" (Child 274), which details the singer's discovery of his wife's infidelity, and folktales such as AT 850—variants of which contain a suitor test involving the identification of the color of the princess's pubic hair. Obscene toasts and verbal dueling have also been studied, particularly within African American folklore.

Traditional performers generally made a strong distinction between single-sex and mixed-company contexts, avoiding at least some sorts of obscene folklore when in the presence of children, clergy, disapproving collectors, or the opposite sex. By contrast, some folklore items that might be considered obscene by contemporary standards in the United States today were openly performed in mixed

company in the past. Examples are *Märchen* and legends containing descriptions of the dismembering or torture of women. Customs such as *bundling*—a courtship pastime in which a couple slept together in the same bed, although clothed—were considered innocent in many agrarian communities in the past but are regarded as illicit in similar communities today.

In many cultures the world over, obscenity—particularly lewd behavior—correlates with sacredness. Deities are represented as lascivious, and calendar customs marking the agricultural or ritual year may include days of obscene license (e.g., *carnival*). Such moments may include lewd dancing, cross-gender behaviors, nudity, and sexually explicit masks or costumes. Initiations to college fraternities often contain similar occasions. Obscene folklore was an important part of Irish wakes as well. In all of these cases, obscenity plays a part in the ritual inversion of everyday life; after the completion of the ritual or outside of the celestial pantheon, such behaviors may again be strongly censured by the community at large.

Folklorists often have faced difficult decisions when collecting and presenting obscene lore. In the past, many collectors rejected such items at the time of performance or conveyed to the performers beforehand an unwillingness to record such materials. Other collectors recorded obscene items but decided against publishing them, presumably out of deference to the sensibilities of the reading audience or the reputation of the editor or performers. Still others devised methods of obscuring or diluting the force of the items, bowdlerizing explicit passages, translating key words into Latin, or replacing letters of obscene words with dashes (e.g., *c—t* for *cunt*). Early collectors, such as the Englishman Sabine Baring-Gould, even occasionally supplied entirely new texts for folksongs they collected. Folklorists involved in the systematization of folklore often avoided classification of obscene materials altogether; Stith Thompson includes a section for obscene erotic materials in his *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* (X700–799, “Humor Concerning Sex”) but refrains from further detailing of elements that might belong under the rubric.

During the nineteenth century, folklorists occasionally circulated obscene materials in “gentlemen’s editions,” with limited subscriptions, plain covers, and little or no advertisement. Robert Burns’s *Merry Wives of Caledonia*—a collection of bawdy folksongs from Scotland—is a particularly noteworthy private edition that appeared posthumously. The great Russian folktale collector Alexander Afanas’ev grouped his informants’ bawdy tales together into a single final volume of his extensive anthology, labeling the material “secret tales” and marketing the volume to a limited circle of scholars. Limited-circulation scholarly series, such as the French and Italian *Kryptadia*, sought to present examples of the entire world’s erotic folklore for the benefit of interested scholars. The American journal *Maledicta* seeks to accomplish a similar goal in a more open

manner and for a broader audience today and includes treatments of erotica, verbal obscenities, insult, and off-color humor.

Although folklorists today may smile at the seeming prudishness or reserve of previous collectors, many of the same questions remain difficult for field-workers in contemporary contexts. Considerable public debate and legal dispute, for instance, has centered on the appropriateness of publishing or marketing obscene lines in contemporary rap music. Various forms of pornography remain illegal to publish or sell, limiting the editorial decisions of even the most liberal-minded collector. Questions of interracial or interdenominational slurs often pose problems to editors concerned with presenting lore that conveys a positive image of the informants and their community. Is it right or fair to the informant to publish remarks that may have seemed appropriate in the locker room or around the campfire but that may brand the informant as racist, sexist, or coarse when appearing in print? Are there genres of behavior that have become traditional—for example, sadism or the making of obscene phone calls—that do not merit inclusion in general anthologies of folklore? Should one anthologize a case of “mooning” (showing the buttocks) by fax or a case of “flaming” (writing a litany of coarse insults) by e-mail? Some newer technologically mediated obscenities pose problems for editors today equivalent to those facing nineteenth-century collectors of folktales and ballads. The transgressive nature of obscenity itself makes such questioning inevitable; when an item ceases to arouse a reader’s surprise (if not consternation), its significance as true obscenity has probably come to an end. Folklorists, as members of cultures, participate in the same processes of definition and decision as their informants and readers, even if they would sometimes prefer to stand outside or above such debates. Thus, the decision to publish obscene materials may change their reception within the source community, altering, for better or worse, the culture under examination.

Thomas A. DuBois

See Also Carnival; Scatology; Verbal Duel.

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Occupational Folk Heroes

One of the most prolific fields for the creation of folklore is work. Since the industrial revolution defined work as we know it, trades, professions, and occupations of all kinds have developed. Many of these have long histories and proud traditions of struggle and development. An important aspect of these traditions may be a heroic, larger-than-life figure, usually a male, who represents the skills, values, and beliefs of an industry, trade, or occupation. Typically these figures are superhuman axmen, shearers, train drivers, sailors, or cowboys about whom numerous tall tales are woven.

In English-language tradition at least, there is sometimes a close connection between occupational folk heroes who are the product of working groups and heroes who are inventions of fiction writers. The controversy about whether Paul Bunyan was an “authentic” folk hero of timber workers or a literary creation has been echoed in studies of a number of lesser-known American figures. One of these figures is the African American Annie Christmas, who is said to be almost seven feet tall, to have twelve even taller sons, and to run a floating brothel. Neither her prodigious drinking nor her wild ways ended her days, though. Instead, she is said to have killed herself for the love of one who did not want her. According to folklorist Richard Dorson, Annie was solely the creation of Louisiana writer Lyle Saxon. The legendary Febold Feboldson, occupational hero of Scandinavian American farmers, is probably based on the stories told about Olof Bergstrom, a Swedish immigrant to America who appears in newspapers and comics of the early twentieth century and about whom many local tales were told around Stromsburg and Gothenburg, Nebraska. Paul Beath put many of these tales in literary form, furthering the Paul Bunyan–like legendry of Febold, which included such widely told tall tales as hitching a bee to a plow to plow a “beeline,” along with a host of traditional lies involving giant

mosquitoes, hoop snakes, and the business of cutting and selling frozen postholes. The steel mill worker Joe Magarac, created by writer Owen Francis in the 1930s, is a similar instance of an invented hero. Joe, whose surname means “jackass” in Slovak, is seven feet tall, works all day and night, eats enormous meals, molds molten steel through his fingers, and finally melts himself down into steel to prove that he can, literally, make a higher quality product than iron ore.

A number of other occupational heroes have similarly murky folkloric provenances. Old John was said to be the hero of American printers. All printers knew someone who had seen him, or even spoken with him. Old John was so supernaturally skilled that he could wave his hand across the composing desk and all the type would fall magically into its proper place. He always quit at the most critical moment of a job, when the type was being placed. According to the traditions of the printing trade, when John died, he, along with all other printers, would go to compositor’s heaven, a print room with all new presses and type. Another example is the occupational hero of American signwriters, Slappy Hooper. Slappy was a larger-than-life character who painted the biggest, best, and fastest signs. He painted on the sky using “skyhooks” to hold his scaffold, and he once painted a red stove that was so realistic it radiated enough heat to make flowers and weeds bloom in winter. Doubts have been raised from time to time about the authenticity of some occupational heroes of other cultures, such as the Australian figure Crooked Mick, who first came to light in literary rather than folkloric contexts.

Despite the largely, perhaps solely, literary origins of many of these characters, some of them so convincingly echoed the interests and concerns of the occupational groups they purported to represent that they were adopted by those very groups. This was certainly the case with Paul Bunyan and Febold Feboldson and is very much in accord with the processes of folklore, where ideas, characters, and other information originating in nonfolkloric sources may be taken over and adapted by members of folk groups for their own ends and purposes. Broadly distributed themes and story elements of the kind found in most of these occupational hero traditions may be adapted to local places, events, and characters. To describe tales about characters who do not have “authentic” origins within a particular folk group as “fakelore” is to ignore this important aspect of cultural process and implicitly to denigrate those groups who have adopted such characters as occupational heroes.

Occupational heroes should not be confused with the patron saints of many industries and occupations. Such saints are often selected on the basis of the relationship between their skills or attributes and the tasks they perform. So, for example, St. Nikolai is the patron saint of Russian seafarers because he rescues the musician and merchant Sadko of Novgorod from the clutches of the sea czar.

Graham Seal

See Also Children’s Folk Heroes; Hero/Heroine, Folk; Local Heroes; National Folk Heroes.

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Occupational Folklife/Folklore

Expressive aspects of the workplace with special emphasis upon informally learned narrative, skill, and ritual passed from one generation of workers to the next. In Europe, the study of occupational folklife is concerned with both work culture and labor ideology, but parallel work in the United States has concentrated more on cultural expressions (stories, songs, skills, and customs) in the workplace with less emphasis upon the social and political contexts within which these expressions are formed and used.

The Industrial Revolution drew into sharp contrast industrial urbanism and the agrarian divisions of labor and social order that had characterized Europe and the English-speaking world since the early medieval period. In the nineteenth century throughout Western Europe and the British Isles, this contrast suggested to many intellectuals the importance of documenting and preserving these earlier ways of life or modes of economic production and their unique social and spiritual responses before the “dark Satanic mills” wiped them from the face of the earth. It was out of this impulse that Victorian intellectuals and aristocrats on the continent and in England began to conceive of “folklore” as a body of traditional materials that could be collected, documented, and preserved. Ironically, the very industrial trades and occupations that were emerging from this historical epoch (and that, to a great extent, defined the market and industrial era) were themselves unexamined since, in effect, they were seen as antithetical to the very customs, beliefs, songs, and narratives that interested these early scholars. Looking primarily at the theoretical development of American folklore but with an occasional glimpse at research efforts in Europe and Britain, a more comprehensive view of the development of occupational folklife—verbal and material aspects of work—can be drawn.

In both Europe and the United States, early students of occupational and industrial folklore were drawn toward resource-based trades that established

regional and national identities linked to the need for raw materials. Mining, fishing, building construction, farming, ranching, and timber harvesting became the foci of the first occupational researchers. In Europe, particularly Scandinavia and Germany, this early research focused on preindustrial technologies and occupational structures linked to traditional village economies. The emphasis in much of this research was on craft and traditional forms of technology that were viewed in an evolutionary context, from the earliest periods of settlement to more contemporary, nineteenth-century occupational complexes. This focus on craft as a part of community and family life created a holism in European folklife studies that continues today. Occupational folklife—the entire range of verbal and nonverbal traditional expression—continues to shape this approach. Early occupational folklorists in Denmark, Sweden, England, and the Soviet Union drew direct connections between craft and guild solidarity and the “aristocracy of labor.” More elaborate forms of political resistance and class formation during the industrialization period created a linkage of worker and labor consciousness that continues to shape much research in this field throughout the world.

In the United States, this historical response to emergent forces of work in a new physical environment resulted in a more nationalistic and romantic view of work culture. John Lomax and N. Jack Thorp, collected and reinterpreted the songs, stories, and verbal arts of the American buckaroo (cowboy) as an embodiment of a frontier, democratic ideal. These early American folklorists paid little attention to the economic or structural responses of buckaroo employment, with its nomadic uncertainty and state capitalist support of the railroads. Ironically, the occupational folklore of this group continues to contain much material expressing workers’ opposition to these various forms of exploitation. Lomax and Thorp focused instead on popular concepts of the trade, paying particular attention to the way in which the western landscape and the expansive hardships of frontier life in America created new and unique forms of traditional expression or provided opportunities for the adaptation of Anglo or European traditional forms to the American context. The ballad, tall tale, and etiological legend forms of Europe were transformed to depict the heroic exploits of cowboy lore. Lomax, Thorp, and later Frank Dobie relegated the craft, techniques, and structural concerns of this trade to virtual invisibility in order to foreground a popular mythology of primitive romanticism that more closely reflected their externally derived concepts of class and culture. In contrast to European folklore collections of this period, however, there was some diversity and internal ethnic confrontation within these early collections. Whereas the European scholars focused more on work craft and traditional technology in homogeneous communities as an embodiment of national or regional character, the Americans devoted some of their energies to collecting verbal forms that depicted women, African Americans, Mexican Americans, and Native Americans in a more diverse, but often

ethnocentric manner. In general, occupational folklorists in Europe evinced a more sophisticated view of the ideological aspects of work culture; the development of occupational folklore in the United States was less politically sophisticated and more closely linked to a more culturally diverse yet stereotypical concept of workers.

During the post–World War I period, regional folklorists in continental Europe, the United Kingdom, and the United States greatly expanded their respective collections of occupational folklife. In Europe, these documentary efforts often were conducted as part of nationally supported programs designed to preserve disappearing material and architectural heritage. In England and throughout the British Isles, researchers set about developing more systematic strategies of collecting and archiving a wide array of cultural materials, and the technical concerns of work were simply viewed as a segment of these wider collecting efforts. In the United States, regional folklore societies collected primarily verbal material, with linguistic and etymological interests leading some researchers into urban and industrial trades. The jargon, or *argot*, of the prostitute, grifter, and pickpocket that appeared in linguistic and sociological journals soon led regional collections into the listing of other work languages, from that of firemen and policemen to that of painters and actors.

In the 1930s, the depression and the ensuing economic collapse throughout the West resulted in a refocusing of occupational folklife. The industrial worker had, up to this point, been considered either a contemporary embodiment of a craftsmanship continuum as in Europe or the urban carrier of surviving verbal traditions in the United States, but massive urban migration and the collapse of previous conceptualizations of work culture forced a reformulation of these perspectives. In Europe, this transition resulted in an immersion of occupational folklife studies within ideological and political frames of reference, affecting larger concepts of class formation and labor history. In the United States, this transition laid the groundwork for more comprehensive documentation of occupational culture through which work culture was represented multivocally by individual workers, songwriters, fiction and nonfiction writers, and filmmakers. American folklorists paralleled European and British folklorists in their interest in agency and class formation, but they lacked acceptance within the labor movement itself as allies in trade union ideology. This distrust on the part of organized labor in the United States has continued to fractionalize occupational folklife studies within and outside the academy. In Europe and Britain, the inclusion of occupational folklife as a part of wider structural and ideological frames of reference within the labor movement and the academy has resulted in the establishment of archives, museums, and labor studies centers that subsume occupational folklife studies under various local, regional, and national jurisdictions. In his international review of occupational folklore studies, Flemming Hemmersam

noted that early occupational folklorists in the Soviet Union used early collections of workers' folklore as means of "folklorism," the use of folk material for political purposes. In Germany, according to Hemmersam, Robert Michels and Will-Erick Peuckert paralleled the politically motivated work in the Soviet Union, but the historical and comparative methods of German linguistic and etymological research drew these earlier studies into more academic and less politically oriented collections. The contemporary research of Lutz Rohrich and Herman Bausinger reflects these influences. British and Italian interests in workers' songs, stories, and popular media led occupational folklorists into more careful examinations of the relationship between mass media and local work cultures, and Scandinavian scholars, drawing on regional and nationalist frameworks for the identification and collection of agricultural and resource occupations, developed a systematic method for documenting both the material and the verbal aspects of work culture that continues to inform occupational folklore researches in those countries.

Turning to developments in the United States, one of the earliest American folklorists interested in industrial folklore, George Korson, was drawn to collecting miner's lore and personal experiences through his journalistic focus on regional lore in Pennsylvania. As Archie Green stated in his two overviews of occupational folklore, unlike many of his colleagues before and since, Korson was able to work with the United Mine Workers, publishing collected songs and stories in its journal and relying on contacts and union support to make contact with individual miners. In his many books and articles, Korson walked a fine line between describing actual work experiences (dangers of the work, songs, and customs of above- and underground experience, customs, and work traditions) and making various political characterizations of the mine workers' resistance to capitalist exploitation. Korson recorded protest songs, strike ballads, and laments for workers killed in disasters and labor struggles, yet he never overtly aligned himself or his work ideologically with the causes expressed in these materials. In bringing miners and their occupational folklore to the attention of a national audience, Korson led the way toward state-supported programs designed to document occupational folklore as a means of articulating emergent and resilient forms of national character. At the same time, his populist and progressive political motivations remained largely implicit in his writings and public presentations.

In the 1930s, the Works Progress Administration provided an opportunity for writers and intellectuals in the United States to develop an array of public projects aimed at restoring a sense of national pride in the everyday experiences of American citizens. As a part of this movement, folklorist Ben Botkin and writers Nelson Algren and Jack Conroy began to collect and present aspects of worker stories and perspectives that they termed "occupational folklore." These collections paralleled the approach of Korson in their attention to the words and stories



Poster by Isadore Posoff for the Works Progress Administration, featuring a Pennsylvania miner, 1937.(Library of Congress)

of industrialized, urban workers, but they did not have the sophistication and holistic sweep of Korson's work. Wayland D. Hand, a folklorist from Utah, extended his interest in the folklore of hard rock miners into an international, comparativist study of occupational folklore—primarily verbal arts and legends—that linked American research to European antecedents and parallels. Unfortunately, this comparativist approach remains one of the few international studies of occupational folklore written by an American scholar, and Hand's call for more cross-cultural research in this area largely has gone unanswered.

In the 1960s, a former shipwright in the United States and a historian in England reformulated the field of occupational folklore. With a background in both an industrial trade and organized labor, Archie Green's research into labor and occupational folklore reflected a division between the political and ideological culture of the labor movement itself. What is most important in Green's work, particularly his early descriptions of labor and occupational folklore and his investigation of the relationship between popular and local working-class culture in the production of popular/folk music, is his ability to bring together academic interests in occupational traditional culture with an appreciation within the labor movement for cultural expression and ideology through folklore. Green's innovations in occupational research led to the first collaboration between the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organization (AFL-CIO) and occupational folklorists at the Smithsonian Institution's 1976 Festival of American Folklife; in addition, he also drafted and lobbied for the passage of the American Folklife Act that established a permanent American

Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. This foray into public support of occupational folklife parallels museum and archival networks already well established in Europe and Great Britain.

In England, E. P. Thompson's view of class formation within British society shifted historical and cultural studies away from the somewhat mechanical forms of Marxist interpretation, which had characterized earlier exploitations of work culture for socialist ends, and toward a more processural, humanist social history of work culture. Raphael Samuel, Thompson, and a whole generation of working-class intellectuals sought to identify and describe the contexts within which cultural resistance to capitalism on a local, regional, and international scale took place. Folklorists within this emergent social and critical reshaping of the intellectual relationship between academics and the world of work emerged from the workplace itself, with miners, industrial laborers, and building trades workers becoming the collectors and interpreters of working-class culture within these various trades.

In the United States, Archie Green's ability to bridge the academic-labor public contexts, within which occupational folklore and the more inclusive folklife have developed, has brought us to the current generation of occupational folklorists in Europe and the United States. Hemmersam, in his summary of European and American research in workers' folklore, stated that there are basically four divergent approaches to the field. Interestingly, he divided these approaches into their respective ideological strategies, that is, with regard to the "system of attitudes, concepts and ideas behind the researcher's concern with workers' culture." The four ideological approaches are: (1) the classic folkloristic and ethnological approach, (2) bourgeois research of workers' culture, (3) a socialist/communist-oriented school, and (4) empirical research on workers' culture.

Viewed from this perspective, the classic folkloristic approach maintains the antiquarian's ideological commitment to a peasant model of work. Here, the researcher adopts a historical, regional, and often nationalistic theoretical position, through which surviving work traditions of the past are maintained and/or represented through material culture into the present. Flemming Hemmersam cited the work of Europeans Vesa Kurkela and Matz Rehnberg. In the United States, the work of Bruce Nickerson and Michael Owen Jones fell into this category.

This is contrasted with a more contextualized, ethnographic approach to work culture that maintains some of the elements of folkloristic research in its emphasis upon specific expressive forms within broader social and political contexts. In Europe, this approach is exemplified in the work of Birgitta S. Frykman in England and Hemmersam in Sweden. In the United States, it is evident in the work of Robert McCarl, Jack Santino, and Paula Johnson.

Bourgeois research of workers' culture maintains the position that mass media, public schooling, and the uniform experiences of urban life have penetrated

working-class culture to the point that there are virtually no unique or oppositional forms remaining. Hemmersam cited the work of German scholar Herman Bausinger as a proponent of this approach, and in the United States, the works of Richard Dorson, Hennig Cohen, and Tristram Coffin fall into this category.

Socialist/communist approaches to workers' culture see a culture that has been created exclusively in opposition to capitalism and capitalist modes of production. In Europe, this approach has a rich and deep history, and Hemmersam cited Anders Björklun and Gösta Arvastson as the two main proponents of this approach. In the United States, the approach has not been as actively expressed, although certainly more Marxist views of work culture, from the work of Harry Braverman and Archie Green to the folkloristic writings of José Limón and Manuel Peña, have been informed by a more oppositional view of cultural formation in working-class communities.

Finally, the empirical approach has produced large collections of the cultural materials of work with little attention to social or ideological context. Hemmersam noted the work of Simo Laaksovirta and Ulla-Maija Peltonen as providing a useful description of how this approach is employed in Europe. In the United States, this type of research has been conducted primarily by Wayland Hand and Horace Beck.

It is difficult to summarize all of the approaches to occupational folklore to date, but beyond discussing Hemmersam's useful divisions, it might be helpful to suggest how these various forms of research are related. In this era, Marxism has virtually disappeared as a viable political structure, yet the theoretical tools of Marxist analysis provide a useful perspective from which to critically evaluate the development of occupational folklore in the West, and Renato Rosaldo has provided a theoretical framework that might pull these disparate elements together. In brief, Marx stated that the mode of production—the technology and practices of producing food and energy—to a great extent determine or influence all other forms of social life. Human reproduction, social organization, economic life, and belief or “superstructural” aspects of a culture are based on these structural constraints. The following characterization simplifies this culturally materialist approach to an examination of structure—the received circumstances of a particular historical response to economic and physical conditions that result in forms of social, political, and demographic response within a particular work organization. Beyond simply a labor market, the inherited structure of a particular type of work generates a mode of production that elicits a specific, concrete historical response. This response is made up of two elements, the relational and the practical. A worker responds to and becomes a part of the forces of production (the tools, techniques, hierarchies, and economic constraints of a particular type of work); at the same time, he or she creatively and informally participates in an informal world of human relations that, to a great extent, responds to and resists

the very forces of production in which the work is conducted. A welder in the Portland shipyards in World War II, for example, acquiesced to the speedup and shortcuts of a wartime economy and its concomitant demands on production, while at the same time, the subculture of welders within the shipyard work culture determined the limits and boundaries of their complicity in this process. Work culture and its resulting occupational folklore is shaped by the forces of production, but it is born and given life by the informal relations of production that put a human face to work experiences and provide the technical means of opposition.

In addition to structure, it also is important to investigate *agency*—the informally held value system that is born at the point where the primary work group defines its independence from and opposition to all other hierarchies and groups within the workplace. Agency is the collective expression of specific individual choices that are made by workers as they form a class response to the constraints imposed by supervisors, union representatives, other workers, and even family and community members. Agency is defined by the primary work group, that face-to-face ensemble of individuals who respond to the occupational constraints of structure, and it defines the informal boundaries of cultural experience within that structure. A firefighter, for example, must respond to the physical realities of a high-rise building fire using the technical (structural) techniques of his or her trade. At the same time, however, he or she does so using knowledge and ideologies (agency) engendered by fellow workers, who inform and evaluate the performance.

Finally, there are border zones and boundaries that are constantly shifting in the world of work and are irreducible to a particular category or characterization as aspects of work structure or agency. Underemployed workers, the arrival of various ethnic, generational, or sexual preference groups, radical shifts in labor markets that export entire industries and relegate an entire generation of skilled tradespeople to obsolescence, as well as the depictions of workers in the media and in the representations created by folklorists—these are transition points or boundaries within the global economy that create the dynamic fluidity of work in the contemporary world. Increasingly, the worker today has no security but exists in a liminal context of tension between his or her historical preparation for a particular work structure, a set of personal values and ethos born of informally generated responses (agency) that reflect the primary work group's ability to accept or reject, assimilate, or alter the internal and external assaults on its collective will. New workers, loss of a labor market, or de-skilling force all workers into a daily reappraisal of how the unavoidable evolution of structure will affect our ability to survive. For their part, women, people of color, and a new generation of workers with new values experience internal boundaries caused by a denial of communication across the ever-increasing number of challenges to the status

quo. Hemmersam noted the general shift in studies of occupational folklore worldwide from studies of lore to studies of the workers themselves, from externally conceived attempts to document occupational folklore for any of the various theoretical or ideological reasons mentioned earlier to a more internally generated concern for and articulation of the workers' own point of view. Stating this within the framework previously outlined, the concentration upon structural concerns in the study of work culture (survival of skills and materials from previous modes of production or a concentration on the historical evolution of a particular work process, for example) has given way to greater attention to various forms of agency (resistance to particular labor markets, the formation of oppositional forms directed at a further de-skilling or rationalization of work). This movement has created, in turn, an international context within which newer, oppositional forms from cultures outside of the workplace are creating new boundaries. Taken together, the structure, agency, and boundaries within any occupation create a cultural framework that is central to our understanding of contemporary life but irreducible to an individual representation of that life.

Robert McCarl

See Also Occupational Folk Heroes; Organizational Folklore.

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Oikotype/Oicotype

The local form of a text type (known as either oikotype or oicotype). C. W. von Sydow, who introduced the concept into folklore studies, borrowed it from biology, where *ecotype* means a variety of a species that possesses inherited characteristics that enable them to thrive in a particular habitat. Usually applied to

longer folklore forms such as folktales and ballads, oikotypification occurs when regular changes occur in a text type's content, style, or structure as it adapts to the preferred patterns of a particular locality or culture group. Von Sydow's concern was the manner in which folktale performers who moved across regional and national boundaries told their stories in ways that conformed with the storytelling norms of their new cultural milieus. If a story caught the imagination of storytellers native to the new environment, it gradually would change from its original form while assuming characteristics suitable for its adopted locale.

An oikotype may be thought of as a special kind of subtype, one that is tied explicitly to a particular cultural setting. The process of oikotypification resembles localization, but the latter phenomenon usually refers to relatively superficial adaptations of a text type to a locality, such as changes in place- or personal names. Oikotypification suggests changes that affect the text type's narrative core. For example, the repetition by threes that characterizes most traditional narratives from Indo-European traditions may become repetition by fours when a tale is taken up by narrators from Native American cultures such as the Navajo, whose pattern number is four. Von Sydow's borrowing from biology was refined in the work of Roger Abrahams. Working with the narrative folklore of urban African Americans, Abrahams sought an approach to identifying what was culturally characteristic of the material these people performed. Many of their jokes, for example, were versions of international tale types, but Abrahams believed that an examination of their folklore would reveal particular ways of narrating that the African American performers found especially attractive. These tropisms might involve the content that had been von Sydow's principal interest but could also include structural properties, diction, framing devices, imagery, and symbols. Once the oikotypal pattern for a particular locality or group had been isolated, Abrahams noted, examination of a single piece of lore might reveal whether it came from that group.

Versions of the British ballads anthologized by Francis James Child that have been encountered among American traditional singers often reflect the process of oikotypification. For example, the texts may be shorter than their British counterparts, often pared down to what has been called the "emotional core." Moreover, supernatural elements may become rationalized, and topics of high seriousness may be treated with earthy matter-of-factness. Moral preachments may be added to those ballad narratives that lend themselves to such homiletics.

Although von Sydow's approach to folklore studies was exclusively textual, the concept of oikotype may have applications for performance-oriented folklorists. The geographically distinct styles of singing identified by Alan Lomax's cantometrics project, for instance, may amount to an identification of oikotypes of approaches to song performance.

William M. Clements

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Onomastics

From the Greek word *onoma*, meaning “a name,” the term *onomastics* (or *onomatology*, as it is sometimes called) means the study of names. Onomastics has two chief subdivisions, *toponymy* (the study of place-names) and *anthroponymy* (the study of personal names). Each of these categories can be further subdivided, and the relationship of these divisions to folklore may vary considerably.

Historically, the scholarly study of names was begun by European linguists toward the end of the nineteenth century, and it acquired a solid scientific basis in the early years of the twentieth century. The first meeting of the International Congress of Onomastic Sciences was held in Paris in 1938, but it was not until 1987 that the eminent folklorist and onomastician W. F. H. Nicolaisen proposed, at the sixteenth congress, held at Laval University in Quebec, that onomastics be treated as a distinct discipline with its own philosophy and its own theories, rather than as a subspecialty of linguists, philosophers, folklorists, sociologists, psychologists, geographers, historians, and students of literature and aesthetics. Nicolaisen outlined a framework in which like-minded scholars could pursue this goal.

The study of place-names certainly became an important adjunct to nineteenth-century language studies. At the end of the eighteenth century, it was discovered that Sanskrit, the sacred language of ancient India, was, in fact, related to Greek and Latin. This discovery initiated a period of intense research into European languages, resulting in the development of a comparative approach to language—it was soon realized that modern European languages such as French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and Romanian, for example, could all be traced back to earlier forms of Latin. By the end of the nineteenth century, a very refined methodology existed that enabled scholars to pinpoint sound changes as they occurred in time and the concomitant changes to the shape and meaning of words. Theories could be tested because there was a substantial body of data attesting to the nature of Latin during the centuries of Roman domination of Europe and the Mediterranean world. Modern French and Spanish words, for

example, could be traced back by applying the laws that seemed to have governed their evolution, with known Latin forms acting as a control.

As comparative methodology was refined, a second important discovery was made—that not only were many modern European languages sister languages descended from Latin but also that other, seemingly unrelated language families were also related to Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit. Thus, the many Germanic languages, including modern English, Dutch, German, and Scandinavian languages, were seen to be connected, with the Romance tongues, to Celtic languages such as Welsh, Irish, Cornish, and Breton and the great family of Slavic languages, including Russian, Polish, Serbo-Croat, and Bulgarian. All these languages and others not mentioned here were, in turn, related to Iranian and languages of India—hence the term *Indo-European* used to indicate the geographical spread of these distant but related languages. Awareness of this Indo-European family of languages was to influence the study of the folktale in the latter half of the nineteenth century and much of the twentieth.

The reason linguists turned more and more to the study of toponymy is not hard to find. It soon became apparent that contemporary place-names often incorporated elements whose meaning was now opaque, the careful study of which, however, suggested the influence of languages now dead or no longer spoken in a given geographical region.

Building a hypothetical picture of primitive or proto-Indo-European languages by careful comparison of root words common to all, scholars began hypothesizing about the spread of these languages, finding in place-names the earliest evidence of language movement. Indeed, the existence of non-Indo-European roots in certain place-names was the first clue about even earlier human settlement in some countries. As a result, the use of comparative linguistic methodology was seen as central to the study of place-names, the more so because careful analysis revealed considerable layering of languages. Thus, in France, for example, it was possible to isolate place-name roots predating the arrival of Celtic-speaking peoples, who, in turn, adapted earlier forms to their language, only to have their own forms adapted and modified by subsequent external influences—of Latin with the colonizing Romans and later by Germanic speakers. Much of Europe shows this kind of depth and richness with its toponyms, be they towns and cities, rivers, lakes, mountains, or hills. This explains why so much onomastic research in Europe has been focused on unraveling the etymologies or history and meaning of place-names and so dominated by linguists. That historians have been so intimately connected with European place-name study is also logical since they were the scholars whose study of ancient documents produced the earliest known or attested forms of place-names.

This same preoccupation with the history of place-names led to a growing interest in personal names. All personal names seem to have meant something

when they were first applied, but few contemporary names drawn from European languages have transparent meanings. Nowadays, people give names to their children that may come from any European language, regardless of the language spoken by the namer. Yet people often want to know what their names mean. Using the same principles applied to tracing the history of place-names, scholars are usually able to suggest the original meaning of personal names; the diversity of popular books available to facilitate the choice of names for new babies suggests that many people attach great importance to the names they choose, believing perhaps that names have power and that the name's original meaning somehow imprints itself on its bearer.

Underlying this desire to know the origin and meaning of names, be they place-names or personal names, is the fundamental need felt by humans to identify the physical world around them and to identify other humans. The naming and identifying of individuals creates a sense of social order and establishes sets of relationships; the naming of places helps make the unknown and potentially threatening known and familiar. Naming thus allows humans to domesticate the world about them, to acquire a sense of control, however illusory in reality that control might be. The fact remains that all human societies name themselves and name features of the world around them, as they perceive the world to be. As such, naming is therefore a very ancient and a very traditional preoccupation. And since tradition remains a central concern of the folklorist, the folklorist is interested in names and the process of naming. However, since tradition is not immutable but instead subject to the forces of change, the folklorist is also interested in the patterns that develop and emerge in space and time, though focusing more on the informal process than, for example, on the institutionalized processes established by governmental bureaus and boards of names and naming that are in charge of official naming (though even formally constituted naming institutions are subject to the vagaries of fashion).

It is not easy to establish how very ancient place-names were first given or, indeed, how very ancient personal names were first attributed, though one may find ample clues in the naming processes still functioning among many non-European peoples (the 1990 movie *Dances with Wolves* owes its title to just such a process). European place-names and personal names were very much in their present form, however, when, at the end of the fifteenth century, Europeans first came to the New World, as they quickly named the Americas.

European exploration and subsequent settlement drew on contemporary European patterns of naming in the wake of post-Renaissance voyages around the world. Wherever Europeans passed and wherever they settled, the place-names they created tended to follow recognizable trends. Prominent features, at first observed from the sea, were named to reflect their appearance, the date on which they were encountered (and were often named after that day's saint in the

Catholic calendar), after royal patrons, or after some fortuitous circumstance. Settlements were named in a similar fashion or, with increasing frequency, to recall the home town or city of prominent early settlers. As settlements grew in number, whole regions were named in memory of the home country, and subdivisions likewise often reflected European administrative units such as counties.

Relationships with native peoples were both good and bad, though in many parts, more bad than good—as is attested by native names existing only in corrupt forms, the originals of which can only be established by comparison with native languages that were not wiped out by war or disease.

Indeed, the number of Native American toponyms is sparse throughout most areas of North America, remaining only in the names of some states, rivers, and occasional settlements. They are most numerous in areas that remained unsettled until comparatively recent times, although recent official policy in Canada, for example, has seen a trend toward the reestablishment of native names or the substitution with native names of European forms; this is especially true in the Arctic regions.

The most striking feature of North American place-names is the linguistic diversity of toponyms of European origin. Early European explorers included the French, the British, the Spanish, the Portuguese, and the Basques, all of whom have left a greater or lesser imprint on contemporary maps. Changing patterns of domination, however, have muddied the toponymic waters. Newfoundland, one of the earliest regions of the continent to be influenced by Europeans, has place-names of French, British, Spanish, Portuguese, and Basque origins, though not infrequently, the oldest forms have undergone considerable transformation. Place-names of apparent French origin are, in fact, Basque names that were given French forms; seemingly English names are anglicized versions of earlier French or Portuguese names. Names of native origin are often the most recent, given by nineteenth-century explorers of the Newfoundland interior accompanied by Micmac guides.

This pattern is reflected across the continent. French explorers were often the first Europeans to set foot in many parts of North America, and there are few states and no Canadian provinces where the French did not leave their mark. The Spanish influence in Florida and the Southwest has been well documented. To these earlier settlements' names were later added names given by eighteenth- and especially nineteenth-century immigrants. In the same period, new patterns in the naming of settlements began to appear, one notable example being the application of names drawn from classical antiquity, reflecting the then new interest in the classical age. Similarly, religiously inspired settlement names stud the maps with biblical terms, and other names reflect the revolutionary period in Europe and North America. Some mapping of settlement patterns based on linguistic toponyms is very instructive not only about ethnic movement but also

about regional and dialectal European influences and philosophical views popular at a given period.

Because of the relatively recent settlement in the New World that has given rise to place-names whose earliest forms are readily identifiable if one has sufficient knowledge of post-Columbian history, place-name studies have, with the exception perhaps of names of Native American origin, been a good deal less etymologically oriented in North America than in Europe. Interest has tended to focus more on social and historical factors in the patterns of naming, rather than on the original meaning of names. To this end, though it is still necessary to make the best use of all available documents in order to identify the earliest and subsequent forms of names, contemporary onomastic studies recognize that names are far more than the meaning of the words that become names and that central to the study of names today should be the namer, the name, the naming process, and name usage. Such an approach requires familiarity with a wide variety of humanistic disciplines, not simply with the history of languages or of colonization.

It was noted earlier that folkloristic interest in naming is fundamental but that not all subdivisions of onomastics are necessarily of equal interest to the folklorist. What follows is an outline of most of the main and some of the minor areas of naming that may concern the folklorist, beginning with the broad subfield of toponymy.

Among the oldest features named by humans must stand elevations, be they mountains, hills, ridges, or crests, since elevations have always been convenient reference points. The technical term for the study of elevations is *oronymy*; it includes not only the names of heights but also the terms used to name kinds of geographical elevations. These reflect settlement patterns, insofar as early settlers would have used their native, dialectal terms. It is possible to use a knowledge of, for example, regional English terminology as a clue to the peopling of the regions of North America. The folklorist will be particularly interested in the etymologies offered by locals to explain or justify the use of such-and-such a name, as when the name seems to refer to a historical event or when its meaning is not immediately evident and a story is created to provide an apparently satisfactory meaning.

Alongside the naming of elevations stands the naming of bodies or courses of water, or *hydronymy*. Folklorists are particularly interested in microhydronymy, the names given to small bodies of water or water courses not usually large enough to figure on maps but to which some significance is attached by the local population. These may range in size from duck ponds and swimming holes to alleged bottomless lakes or holes, about which there frequently is a body of anecdotes of legendary nature.

An area of naming that seems to have attracted little scholarly attention until recently is what one might term *hydroronymy*, or naming used to designate the

contiguity of land and water features. This is of particular significance to people whose work places them on water, be it sea, lake, or river, for whom a water-borne perspective is important. Thus, sandbanks in rivers, reefs, or shallows in a lake or sea, inlets, bays, landings, and landmarks will all be given names. But the most important aspect of land-sea features is perhaps those features that are not visible to either a land- or sea-based observer: undersea features that are significant to fishers, for example, the careful location of which enables them to know when a vessel is poised over a fruitful fishing ground. Today, of course, with modern technology, it is possible to pinpoint such locations with incredible accuracy, for satellites and miniature computers allow the most precise location finding in the thickest of fogs. But before the advent of such technology, fishers had to rely on traditional forms of location finding, often using a system of triangulation based on landmarks seen from the sea or lake.

So far, the focus has been on natural features of land and water; geopolitical names and naming bring toponymic concerns into the lap of the everyday. But though the folklorist may have only limited interest in the naming of countries or continents, states, provinces, and other official subdivisions established by governments, interest grows when one considers the local, regional subdivisions. Thus, patterns useful to understanding local context emerge in an examination of school districts and the naming of schools, for example, all of which will give some insight into prevailing local perspectives. It is, however, when one comes to the level of community, be it city, town, village, hamlet, or whatever term is used locally to designate types of community, that tradition is most clearly at play.

Thus, any reasonably large agglomeration will be divided into informal but no less real (to their inhabitants) neighborhoods; the boundaries of such neighborhoods are marked by streets (whether they are called avenues or boulevards, lanes or alleys, or any of the myriad such terms available); the study of *odonymy* casts much insight into historical development, fashions of naming, and, indeed, contemporary thinking in urban planning. Of no less importance are the patterns in the naming of all public buildings, from schools to hospitals, churches to malls, cinemas to sports fields.

Here, the formal overlaps with the informal. In some communities, people favor naming their homes instead of or in addition to using a sanctioned street number, and patterns reflecting prevailing fashions are nowhere more visible than in the names given to shops and stores. The importance to the individual's cognitive map of local but unofficial features is often only accessible to the careful folklorist who seeks information on the names of fields, street corners, and other unofficial sites.

Such place-name features not only draw the formal into the informal, they also draw the inanimate of the toponym to the animate of the anthroponym or personal name. Personal names are given to inanimate objects such as boats, cars,



Phyllis Wheatley Elementary School in the northwest area of Miami. (AP/Wide World Photos)

trucks, spaceships, and ocean-going vessels; the process is clearly both personal and important since people also name stuffed toys, plants, and even “pet stones.” Insofar as insight can be gained both on an ancient and traditional practice and on very personal processes, such study is clearly of interest to the folklorist.

The second major element of onomastics, anthroponymy, also deals with a wide range of naming practices. Although contemporary surnames are generally inherited and of interest chiefly for historical reasons, first names are of interest for very immediate reasons. Depending on a community’s history and its openness to innovation, different patterns of naming can be observed. In some families, for example, there is a very strict adherence to tradition, with the eldest son taking his father’s or grandfather’s name; male and female children may be named according to a strictly observed hierarchy. The folklorist will attempt to uncover such patterning, in addition to noting changes in the pattern. In the last few generations, there has been, in some segments of society, considerable innovation based on the influence of the cinema, television, and popular music (although there is nothing new about naming children after famous, powerful, or otherwise influential people).

More interesting perhaps to the folklorist is the field of nicknaming. Nicknames, often attributed at an early age by one's peers, are not infrequently pejorative, brutally reflecting a perceived flaw of character, appearance, or behavior. All manner of anecdotes are told explaining the origin of such names. However, various systems exist in small communities to identify individuals who may share their name with one or more people in the same area; three women with the same first name and the same surname may be identified with reference to men in their families or to the places where they live; the same process is, of course, found with males sharing the same names. Identification may make use of this system in conjunction with personal nicknames. As an extension, relational designations are sometimes used, calling male elders "Uncle" or female elders "Aunt" as terms of respect; at times, hypocoristic terms, or terms of endearment, may acquire the value of a first name or nickname.

An extension of nicknaming is encompassed in the French phrase *blason populaire*, used to refer to nicknames applied not to individuals but to whole communities. Nicknames and the related anecdotes usually poke fun at the bearers of the *blason*, often going from the purely local rivalry between neighboring communities to the regional and, indeed, the national level.

Given the traditional importance of animals in people's lives, it is hardly surprising to find patterns in the naming of domestic animals. A distinction can be drawn between farm or working animals, on the one hand, and pets, on the other. The former may still maintain traditional patterns; in recent years, however, pet names have been as subject to the influences of education and the media as have the names of their owners. As a corollary to pet names, patterns of naming in pedigree animals also should be examined.

To conclude with humans, however, a final area of interest concerns names given to groups. These may include the ephemeral, such as pop music groups, to the more durable, such as sports teams, and the less well known, such as military units. In all cases, names are given in order to promote a specific image. Of interest to the student of contemporary society are the names found in literature and the media. Pen names, comic book characters, and names of characters in cartoons, movies, and videogames can all, in their own way, inform the scholar about change in society and about the enduring significance of names as a reflection of evolving cultural preoccupations.

Gerald Thomas

See Also Ethnic Folklore.

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Oral-Formulaic Theory

The approach to the study of oral tradition and works with roots in oral tradition that prescribes a specialized language or idiom as the basis of composition in performance. Also known as the Parry-Lord theory, after its founders, this approach puts a premium on the utility of patterned phraseology (*formulas*), typical narrative scenes (*themes*), and large-scale organization (*story-patterns*) in providing ready solutions to the performer's ongoing challenge of maintaining fluent, intelligible composition. In addition to applying the theory to living traditions, chiefly poetry, scholars have retrospectively analyzed ancient and medieval works to determine the extent of their dependence on such paradigms and, in some cases, their "oral" or "literary" character. With typical structures demonstrated in more than 130 separate language areas, the most pressing question has become how to interpret works composed in this specialized idiom.

The oral-formulaic theory began with Milman Parry's pioneering studies of the Homeric epics, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, which reveal systematic patterning behind the recurrence of particular phrases, especially noun-epithet expressions such as "swift-footed Achilles" and "goddess bright-eyed Athena." Instead of explaining the great epics as either conglomerate editions of smaller poems (according to the analyst school) or the personal and individual achievements of a single genius (the unitarian school), Parry argued that a poetic diction as systematized as the language of the Homeric poems must be the legacy of generations of bards, who perfected the idiom over centuries. His fundamental insight was thus that the language of Homer was traditional.

The core of Parry's theoretical proposal was the formula, which was defined as "an expression regularly used, under the same metrical conditions, to express an essential idea." Parry eventually enlarged this definition beyond the noun-epithet phrase to include any metrically determined unit of Homeric diction. Thus, for example, recurrent expressions for speech introduction (e.g., "As so he/she spoke") were shown to combine with recurrent names for mortals or gods to produce predictable—and in terms of oral-formulaic theory, useful—hexameter lines.

Theme

Narrative “words”—recurrent actions or scenes—in oral-formulaic theory; defined by Albert Lord as “groups of ideas regularly used in telling a tale in the formulaic style of traditional song.” First suggested by Milman Parry in his review of Walter Arend’s 1933 monograph on typical scenes in Homer; the theme has a heritage in earlier studies of repeated actions in various narrative works, just as the Parry-Lord formula can be traced to the earlier analysis of *Parallelstellen* (parallel passages) in ancient and medieval poetry. What distinguishes both formula and theme from this background is the insistence that they constitute a performance idiom, a special compositional language that was both traditional, in the sense of inherited and collective, and oral, in the sense of unwritten or pre-textual. Examples of themes in various traditions include: assembly, arming for combat, boasting before battle, sea voyage, feasting, exile, and the “beasts of battle” (carrion animals).

Lord, to whom the concept of theme should largely be attributed, conceived of the unit as an idea pattern together with a relatively stable core of verbal expression. As he demonstrated in Homer and in the south Slavic epic tradition, occurrences of themes in those traditions correspond in terms of the actual formulas employed, with predictable flexibility due to different singers or regional dialects. South Slavic bards also were shown to adapt their thematic patterns to individual songs or performances. Likewise, narrative inconsistencies—cases of Homer or his counterparts ignoring content and thereby allowing apparent contradictions within a given work—were explained in terms of themes that have lives of their own. A contradiction within a single performance fades in importance when weighed against the expressive impetus of a theme in the tradition as a whole. That is, the individual instance always draws its most fundamental meaning from the larger traditional context, which dwarfs any single performance.

As with other aspects of the oral-formulaic theory, studies of theme spread outward from ancient Greek and south Slavic traditions, especially to Old and Middle English, Old French, Biblical studies, Hispanic, central Asian epic, Irish, Welsh, and other traditions. With that growth, the original definition and concept shifted somewhat, coming to emphasize idea pattern over verbal correspondence among instances; eventually, efforts were mounted to understand the theme within its many different, tradition-dependent contexts. Questions of what mechanisms control aesthetics and whether thematic mechanisms persist when epics become transmitted by writing rather than orally can, as with the formula, be put to rest by viewing themes as metonymic of the tradition at large, with the concrete part standing for a much larger implied whole. One particular feast or battle, for example, is always echoic of other feasts or battles in the audience’s experience of the tradition at large.

John Miles Foley

For Parry, utility in formulaic diction derived from the participation of individual phrases in larger, generative *formulaic systems*, groups of items fitting the same metrical slot that also are related by common semantic and syntactic features. Although this aspect of the poetic idiom furnished the composing poet a

flexibility in line-to-line construction, the simplicity of the diction was attributed to an overall *thrift*—"the degree to which [a formulaic system] is free of phrases which, having the same metrical value and expressing the same idea, could replace one another" (Parry 1971). Formulaic language, therefore, was understood as serving the poet's needs not only in providing ready solutions but also in productively limiting compositional options.

This approach began as an analytical procedure to prove the traditional nature of ancient Greek texts. But Parry, under the influence of his mentor Antoine Meillet and of Matija Murko, a Slovenian academic familiar with south Slavic epic poetry from his own fieldwork, soon added the criterion of *orality* as a necessary implication of the traditional character of verse making. In order to confirm his hypothesis of an oral tradition from which the Homeric poems stemmed, Parry and his assistant, Albert Lord, conducted a large-scale fieldwork expedition to the former Yugoslavia from 1933 to 1935 (continued by Lord from 1950 to 1951 and later) to study firsthand the living phenomenon of south Slavic oral traditional epic. They recorded acoustically or by dictation more than half a million lines of epic from preliterate *guslari* ("bards; those who play the *gusle* [a single-stringed lute]"), now deposited in the Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature at Harvard University; Lord and David Bynum have published selective contents in the series *Serbo-croatian Heroic Songs* (SCHS, 1953–).

Aside from writing a few shorter papers, Parry did not carry out the comparative analyses of Homer and south Slavic epic that he had envisioned. After Parry's death in 1935, Lord assumed responsibility for that planned enterprise and, in fact, moved well beyond the original analogy to make the oral-formulaic theory a truly multidisciplinary undertaking.

The most influential of Lord's writings, in many respects the touchstone for the entire field, is *The Singer of Tales*, completed as his dissertation in 1949 and published in 1960. This book uses the *guslar* in performance as a model for Homer and also for Anglo-Saxon, Old French, and Byzantine Greek narrative poets. In addition to illustrating formulaic composition in the south Slavic songs, *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, *Song of Roland*, *Beowulf*, and *Digenis Akritas*, he also described narrative units called *themes*, or "groups of ideas regularly used in telling a tale in the formulaic style of traditional song." These included, for example, such typical actions as arming a hero, readying a horse, summoning guests to a wedding or battle, and so on. He also identified *story-patterns* that were coextensive with the work as a whole, the most familiar example being the Return song, essentially the story of the *Odyssey*, that also appears in Turkish, Bulgarian, Albanian, Russian, medieval English, and other traditions. At every level, the key concept is multiformity, the mutability of phraseological or narrative patterns within limits, as an aid to composition in performance.

Of Lord's later contributions, Volumes 3 and 4 (1974) of SCHS and *Epic Singers and Oral Tradition* stand out as exemplary. The first of these consisted of his translation and Bynum's edition of *The Wedding of Smailagi'c Meho*, a

12,311-line oral epic performed for Parry and Lord in 1935 by the preliterate singer Avdo Medjević of Bijelo Polje in Herzegovina. The latter volume is a collection of some of his most wide-ranging and important essays, treating Homer, south Slavic, Finnish, Old English, Bulgarian, and central Asiatic epic.

In the wake of the publication of *The Singer of Tales*, the Parry-Lord theory underwent vigorous translation and application to Old English, Middle English, Old French, Hispanic, American folk preaching, biblical studies, and scores of other areas; it also continued to expand in ancient Greek studies. A history of the comparative methodology is available in John Miles Foley's *Theory of Oral Composition*; an annotated bibliography appears in his *Oral-Formulaic Theory and Research*, with updates in *Oral Tradition*.

With formulas, themes, and story-patterns identified in traditions worldwide, new questions began to arise about the implications of oral-formulaic theory for interpretation, especially in relation to texts with extensive prior critical histories, such as the Homeric poems. One of the central tenets of the approach as originally stated held that a certain percentage of formulas and formulaic systems constituted proof of the ultimately oral provenance of a given text, independent of any supporting testimony for that claim. The reasoning proceeded from the criterion of utility: If a poet had regular recourse to ready-made diction and narrative patterns, then he or she was composing traditionally and thus orally. Quantitative measurement of this sort did not take into account the inevitable differences among languages, traditions, or genres, nor did it consider the persistence of the formulaic idiom after the introduction of writing.

Indeed, as the oral-formulaic theory has expanded to more and more traditions, many of them still living, it has become increasingly apparent that an absolute dichotomy of oral versus written does not fit the evidence. Manuscript works that presumably represent freestanding compositions by individual authors still show extensive use of the formulaic language, and different rules govern the structure and texture of formulas and themes from one language to another or even from one genre to another. Additionally, the issue of performance and all that it entails has come to the fore: Oral tradition presents many channels for communication (linguistic, paralinguistic, and nonlinguistic), only a limited number of which are reflected in what we conventionally reduce to a transcribed text.

Another area in which the theory has been modified is in response to the charge of mechanism, that is, the perception that formulas and themes imprison a verbal artist, restricting originality and diluting expressivity. Although based primarily on literary criteria, not all of them applicable to oral tradition, this objection has stimulated a reexamination of what is meant by the "essential ideas" of formulas and the "typical" content of themes. One proposed answer to the quandary consists of understanding the oral-formulaic idiom as a highly focused species of communication, one that encodes complex information in simple forms within the enabling event of performance and by institutionalized reference to the immanent tradition. By employing this

special register of language, in other words, performer and audience (and later, writer and reader, if properly prepared) communicate with greatly enhanced economy. Of course, the traditional language cannot accomplish all of the quotidian tasks normally assigned to a much more generalized register, but as long as audience and reader are fluent in the traditional tongue, its dedicated function promotes a unique economy of expression and reception.

John Miles Foley

See Also Bard.

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Oral Tradition

A Brief Definition

Whether we define the utterances of an oral tradition broadly, as any customary oral expression, or more specifically, as verbal arts using a “poetic” form of spoken language unlike everyday speech, it is generally recognized that oral

traditions may encompass a wealth of verbal genres of enduring value to their communities. The scope of oral-traditional expressions extends from oral histories and folktales to epic poetry; from stylized, lengthy greeting ceremonies to religious invocations, mourning songs, medical recipes, and many other genres. To understand as accurately as possible each oral-traditional expression, we—ideally—learn the language in which it is spoken and the special idioms of that culture’s oral tradition, and we listen to what the tradition bearers have to say about it.

The term *oral tradition* underscores two important aspects of these specialized expressions: their orality and their connection to a tradition. The *oral* half of the label “oral tradition” points to the use of vocal cords (versus pen and paper, keyboard and monitor, etc.) and also the demands upon the narrator or “tradition bearer” that accompany the act of composing “in real time,” without the option to erase, shuffle paragraphs, or cut and paste. An oral performance places demands upon an audience, which participates by listening and, often, by responding. Orality shapes the composition and dissemination of the many forms of performed verbal expressions and art—both narrative and non-narrative.

The *tradition* half of the term “*oral tradition*” balances out the emphasis, implied by the word *oral*, upon the present moment of the utterance, which is shaped by the oral-aural dynamic between the tradition bearer and the other participants, by the sound of a voice, by attentive listening, and by people being present to each other. “Tradition” calls to mind, as far as memory reaches, all of the previous performances of a particular story or song. It also calls to mind the interrelationships between many different genres of oral expression, which, within a particular community, may share a set of related themes, ideals, characters, proverbs, and story patterns, including those appearing in folktales and fairy tales. “Tradition” may also be carried in the register of language that tradition bearers draw upon to recollect and reinvent verbal expressions in performance. Often this register can easily be differentiated from everyday speech. Like “once upon a time,” it sets the stage for a specialized form of communication. The mere intonation of “once upon a time” may invoke the generic expectations intrinsic to fairy tales and the narrative content of those stories known to a community where these tales form a vital part of its culture.

Those who study oral traditions may work with ancient and medieval manuscripts, with the records of anthropologists, folklorists, and linguists, or with living performers and their communities.

Oral Traditions and Folklore

Studies in the twin fields of folklore and oral tradition inevitably converge. The oral performance of a poet, shaman, matriarch, healer, or any other sort of tradition bearer helps to create and re-create the knowledge of a community (its “folklore”). A sophisticated verbal technology, oral traditions encode historical

legends, place-names, detailed medical, botanical, and agricultural information, moral and ethical teachings, games, mourning songs, proverbs, myths, epics, praise songs, and wisdom sayings. The foregoing—and far from comprehensive—list reveals that oral traditions encode highly diverse types of information. It should also be stressed, however, that oral traditions often privilege the performative power of language—sometimes saying is doing. A medical charm incanted by a South Slavic *bajalica* (“conjurer”) may heal the suffering patient, just as the recitation of a genealogy placates ancestors, or Baul devotional songs of mystic minstrels enact the sacred. Thus, the *process* of an oral-traditional performance may bear as heavily upon its significance as the *product*—and we would be mistaken to equate an oral tradition with knowledge that may be distilled into discrete, paraphrasable (written) concepts. Oral-traditional lore is both particle and wave, never solely one or the other.

Although oral-traditional lore may be frozen in writing or recorded by other media, it is usually executed in real-time enactments. Just as *saying* cannot always be parted from *doing*, the lexical content (what is said) during such performances may not be separated from its physicality (how it is said). Such physicality includes the emergent and ephemeral medium of the tradition bearer’s voice (for instance, vocal tone, rhythm, and silence punctuating sound) and, depending on the tradition, his or her gestures, stance, facial expressions, and use of props. Furthermore, oral traditions depend largely upon the face-to-face relationships shared by performer and audience. An audience’s attentive comprehension and feedback vitally contribute to the oral-traditional performance; in turn, a skilled verbal artist adapts his or her performance to the context and the responses of those present. The people’s lore—neither solely process nor product—thus emerges within the community and potentially transforms or maintains it.

Texture

A general term for the poetic devices of the surface level of texts, such as *alliteration*, *assonance*, *consonance*, *anaphora*, and *rhyme*. Sometimes, the term *texture* has been used to cover even broader concepts of diction and meter. According to some authors, *texture* is distinguished from *structure*. The former comprises the organization of prosodic and stylistic features and syntax, and the latter encompasses the large-scale elements such as organization of narration, plot, and story. Heda Jason, in her narrative structural model, separates texture from such categories as *wording*, *narration*, and *dramatization*.

According to some tenets of text linguistics, texture is imbued with cohesive relations. As M. A. K. Halliday and R. Hasan maintain, the text is distinguished from something that is not a text because the parts of a text form a coherent whole: A text has a texture.

Lauri Harvilahti

Diversity and Fluidity in Oral Traditions

The term *oral tradition* does not indicate a homogenous entity—a static and monolithic collection of stories and sayings to which speakers subserviently give voice. Rather, from one culture’s traditional practices to the next, we find that oral traditions are, in fact, highly diverse in terms of function, genre, style, and transmission. A single oral tradition may include a wide variety of important genres, whose tradition-specific parameters will shift from culture to culture and from language to language.

Even the recounting of a single narrative or epic song within one language group’s tradition reveals that there is enormous room for creative expression as well as continual re-tailoring to fit the demands of the performance context. For example, the Tibetan epic *Gesar* (also known as *Geser*, *Gesar of Ling*, and *King Gesar*) may be sung by a traveling bard for a household for the twofold purpose of entertainment and moral instruction or, at the other end of the spectrum, by a solitary Buddhist as he traverses a mountainside chanting *Gesar* “hymns” that are believed to manifest purificatory and protective powers. In the former case, an audience in the typical sense is present, while in the latter, a virtual audience composed of “all sentient beings” witnesses and receives the benefits of *Gesar* prayers. The *Gesar* epic has shown remarkable adaptability in response to both oral and written media, traveling fluidly between the two. Over the past two centuries, literary poems and written rituals (*pujas*) have emerged that reframe *Gesar* for aristocratic and monastic audiences, resulting in more diverse renderings of this oral epic.

Oral Traditions and the Literary Arts

The study of oral traditions has shed light on important features that differentiate them from literary works. Expectations associated with the literary arts do not adequately take into consideration how oral traditions work and may even obscure their aesthetic vitality. The following list, while neither complete nor universally applicable to all oral traditions, provides an overview of key contrasts between oral and literary compositions.

1. Oral traditions do not supply the crude, “primitive” prototype of a written literature; they are a sophisticated form of communication in their own right.
2. In place of the literary tradition’s “original” poem produced by a single author, we find many versions of a well-known narrative, song, or other instances of oral expression that has no ur-form. Each evanescent version may differ according to the talent of a performer and the context of the performance. Even a single storyteller may re-create many versions of “the same” fairy tale or folktale.
3. From a literary perspective, the reuse of a common phrase runs the risk of sounding flat and clichéd. Conversely, recurring traditional “formulas”

Tibetan actor in costume prepares to perform King Gesar in Naqu, Tibet, China, July 7, 2007. (AP/Wide World Photos)



(phrases and verses that sometimes vary little from telling to telling) resonate idiomatically with far greater meaning than would, say, the same number of words utilized in everyday, nontraditional conversation. The same holds true for images, motifs, type-scenes, and story patterns. Consider, for example, such tale types as the Cinderella story or the narrative etiologies that recur in folktales. Rather than being trite, the ongoing reframing of a tale draws its power from a simultaneous responsiveness to the newness of the immediate situation and the traditional weight of a narrative that resonates with prior instances of its telling and reception.

4. While we think of words as units delimited by white space upon the page, a traditional poet or storyteller often conceives of whole units of acoustically encoded information as “words,” whether this means a line of verse, a scene, or an entire story. Each “word,” long or short, forms a part of the performer’s repertoire. Thus, to understand oral expressions properly, we need to learn the working vocabulary, the “words,” of the tradition.
5. A “great divide” was once imagined to exist between oral-folkloric and written-literary works, but the actual practices of tradition bearers have debunked this myth. Artists (among others) negotiate ongoing alliances between the literary and the oral in their creation of verbal expressions. Hybrid compositions in written form—the Middle English *Pearl* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, for instance—employ an oral poetics. Literate tradition bearers and their audiences could (and can) use resources

provided by both the oral-traditional and literary paradigms, much the same way that communities of bi- and trilingual speakers may switch languages multiple times within a single conversation.

6. The following “media morphology” (Foley, 39–53) addresses the adaptability of oral traditions with respect to writing: “voices from the past” (e.g., Homeric epics, the medieval Japanese *Tale of the Heike*, and the Old French *chansons de geste*), “voiced texts” (slam poetry), “written oral poems” (*Pjevannija*, Finnish *Kalevala*, and the works of Lydia Cabrera), and “oral performance” (Tenore Song, Mongolian Long Song [*Urtiin Duu*], Palestinian Hikaye, and Tibetan *Gesar*). “Oral performance” contains by far the most diverse species of oral traditions, and the features of oral traditions in the foregoing section derive mainly from the study of oral performances. Due to their various relationships with the technology of writing, performances and works in the other categories—“voices from the past” and “written oral poems”—may be mistakenly treated as literary. Recognition that these pieces rely upon oral-traditional modes of composition helps audiences reframe their expectations, avoid depending too heavily on the wrong set of interpretive tools (that is, the literary), and learn a new set (the oral).

The Study of Oral Traditions

From the eighteenth century, when oral tales first became the object of enduring scholarly interest, to the present, scholars have attempted to describe the products (and, to some extent, the process) of oral-traditional expression (primarily storytelling, folktales, and oral histories) in light of a growing appreciation for their aesthetic and cultural value. Along the way, as certain ethnocentric prejudices and literary expectations have been recognized, scholarship in this field has gradually paid more attention to what communities and tradition bearers have to say about what they say. There has been a general transition from the appropriation of folktales, epics, and songs for literary collections or ideological agendas toward the study (and perpetuation) of living traditions within their own contexts and according to their own rules. The following survey of approaches to the study of oral traditions is informed by Rosemary Lévy Zumwalt’s in-depth article on the subject, “A Historical Glossary of Critical Approaches.”

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, solar mythology (Friedrich Max Müller), cultural evolutionary studies (Edward B. Tylor, Andrew Lang), and, the most far-reaching of these, Romantic nationalism (Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, Johann Gottfried Herder) treated oral tales as newfound objects of serious study. The nineteenth century witnessed a burgeoning interest in oral traditions for the purpose of defining national identity—an interest that resulted in

fieldwork within national boundaries and the transplanting of oral expressions from indigenous habitats to the more prestigious realm of literature. At their worst, solar mythology, cultural evolutionary studies, and Romantic nationalism problematically stripped agency from the folk, failed to assess the dynamic relationship between performer and audience, and assumed an urtext—an original text—that could be rediscovered through redaction and editing.

Two fruits of the Romantic-nationalist movement in Europe are the Grimm brothers' German *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (*Children's and Household Tales*, 1812–1815) and Elias Lönnrot's Finnish epic, *Kalevala* (1835, 1849). The Grimms' early editions of their folktales and fairy tales treated oral storytelling as *Naturpoesie* ("natural poetry") that ought to be collected and published in a relatively unmodified form. However, due to the poor reception of these early editions and their emerging expectations for the *Märchen*, the Grimms gradually replaced many of the tales with either those that were told by more talented storytellers or their own rewritten versions that blended texts or added content and structure of a more literary style. The result is that the final 1857 edition shines with the polish of literary stories recounted for an audience with literary expectations. The Grimms' careful notes on their collections and their attempts at classification inspired later motif and tale type indices. Like the Grimm brothers, Elias Lönnrot performed fieldwork to gather oral Finnish tales (these recounted in verse), which he then prepared according to the rubric of literary standards. However, Lönnrot was fluent in the traditional oral register of Karelia, and, using the poems he had collected, he both compiled *and* composed the *Kalevala*, which is now considered the Finnish national epic. Lönnrot became the first secretary of the Finnish Literature Society, which to this day promotes the study of Finnish and international folktales and publishes such indices as those set in motion by the Grimm brothers' annotations.

The excesses of Romantic nationalism were countered by twentieth-century "mechanical" approaches: the Finnish historic-geographic method (Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson), where extensive catalogs of geographically dispersed folklore themes served to deflate Eurocentrism, and the age-area hypothesis approach (Franz Boas), which sought to map the migrations of cultures and their traditions, paying little heed to national boundaries. Cultural approaches—culture reflector (Boas), culture and personality (Ruth Benedict, Edward Sapir), and functionalism (William Bascom)—analyzed the relationship between the content of oral-traditional performances and the needs of communities, thereby attempting to bridge the gap that the previous approaches introduced between folk and folkways. The mechanical and cultural approaches could, however, be criticized for not heeding the artistry of oral traditions.

The issue of aesthetics was initially addressed by approaches that explored the patterning of text: epic laws (Axel Olrik), myth-ritual approach (Lord Raglan),

morphological approach (Vladimir Propp), and oral-formulaic theory (Albert Lord and Milman Parry). For the aesthetic interpretation of oral expressions, the first three of these approaches have proven to be rather blunt instruments: “epic laws,” mythic features, and morphological functions describe commonalities among epics and folktales irrespective of their tradition-specific differences. Their generalizations, largely imposed from the outside, often risk being reductive. However, the work of Milman Parry and his assistant Albert Lord transformed the study of oral traditions by generating the first oral theory—*oral-formulaic theory*—that truly took into account the role of oral performance in the process of composition.

Parry, whose dissertation demonstrated that a large percentage of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (nearly 27,000 lines of ancient Greek hexameter combined) relied upon oral-formulaic phrases, decided to record and interview living epic poets in the former Yugoslavia who maintained a tradition similar to that of the ancient Greeks. With Lord as his assistant, Parry sought to understand the role of memory in the recitation of epic-length poems. Without Parry and Lord’s discoveries, we would still have very little insight into the complexities of surviving records of ancient epic poetry and the practices of oral poets and other tradition bearers to this day. They found that, rather than a feat of superhuman memory, a narrative oral poem is composed *in situ* using a repertoire of templates: stories, passages, and lines (also called story patterns, themes, and formulas). To meet the demands of improvisation, a bard re-creates entire stories by expanding or compressing these templates of various duration—as long as they remain recognizable to their audience (Foley’s concept of “variation within limits” in *The Traditional Oral Epic*). Furthermore, an oral poet draws upon a virtual cultural repository (“the tradition”) of shared stories, characters, and idioms familiar to his or her audience. These findings switched attention from the generic patterns common to stories in many languages (patterns perceived by a scholar in isolation from the actual communities that use such tales) to specific traditions, a community’s commentary on the tradition (if possible), and the poet’s process of composition.

Alongside oral-formulaic theory, other approaches have been brought to bear upon the study of oral traditions: structuralism (Claude Lévi-Strauss), the symbolic-interpretive (Richard Geertz), psychoanalysis (Alan Dundes), feminism (Susan Tower Hollis, Susan Slymovics), authenticity (Regina Bendix), ethnopoetics (Dennis Tedlock, Dell Hymes), performance theory (Richard Bauman), and immanent art (John Miles Foley) (for more information, see Zumwalt). Ethnopoetics, performance theory, and immanent art examine the nexus of performance, tradition, and the specialized, idiomatic registers of language that form oral traditions. Proponents of ethnopoetics ask how oral performances may be recorded in writing and read (or re-performed) on their own terms. Dell Hymes has searched for those structural units within a poem that are constitutive of its

Repertoire

In general, the stock of skills a person or persons are prepared to execute; with specific relevance to folklore, the complex sets of interrelated skills, knowledge, and achievements that highlight a person or group's unique abilities in a particular genre (or genres) of traditional performance.

A performer's repertoire is generally used to denote an individual's particular skill, achievement, or knowledge. The term *repertoire* also applies to the same areas on a group level. An example of the former would be the narrative repertoire of a particular raconteur who is recognized for a knowledge of trickster tales or, in the latter case, the craft repertoire of a group known for particular skill at producing specific types of pottery in a style in which the designs and techniques are common to the entire group.

Though generally seen as a discrete set of forms, a person or group's repertoire is built upon a complex of interrelated items that both shape and are shaped by the particular skill being focused upon. For example, the narrative repertoire of the storyteller known for trickster tales not only reflects a learned set of traditional tales but also calls forth a variety of questions about the performer's social and artistic backgrounds. From whom were the narratives learned and how? Were they passed orally from a particular relative, or were they acquired from a number of sources? What were the circumstances surrounding the performance of each particular tale? Was there an associated task or event that precipitated the performance, such as weaving a rug, quieting a child, or entertaining and educating the group? What other skills and activities reinforce or detract from the performer's narrative skills? What is the performer's individual and family status in the community? These are among the variables that affect individual repertoires.

The study of a person's or a group's repertoire requires a multifaceted approach that accounts for as many of the variables involved as possible. The study also requires a recognition of the multiple genres involved in a repertoire. Folklorist Barre Toelken describes repertoire in terms of multiple repertoires. That is, a person's or group's repertoire is a collection of interrelated genres of folklore that reflect and are shaped by the aesthetics of the performers' folk group. On occasion, a specific genre may be the main focus of the performance, but the rendering of each individual item is shaped by the full range of identifiable folklore genres that a particular individual or group possesses, and these are shaped by the aesthetics of the group with which the performers identify. This ideational context thus informs us what the genres of a particular performance are, as well as the realities of the aesthetics and traditions of the group in which the performers live. In addition, it is necessary to be aware of the roles of not only active bearers of tradition (i.e., performers) but also inactive bearers (i.e., those who know but do not actively perform folklore). Both sorts of tradition bearers are vital to the development and perpetuation of repertoires. Thus, the term *repertoire* refers to the full range of knowledge and abilities of the performers as shaped by the relationship among the folk genres in their repertoire and to the traditional aesthetics of the group to which the performers belong.

Randal S. Allison

meaning, working to rediscover the effaced poetic structures of Native American tales recorded in writing by anthropologists and linguists who paid little attention to their artistic value. In contrast, Dennis Tedlock seeks to graphically represent paralinguistic performative traits—such as volume, rising and falling tones, pauses, and so on—by modifying typefaces and spacing. In performance theory, Richard Bauman and others have argued that performance plays an integral role in the meaning of an oral “text.” Bauman’s “keys to performance” (special codes, figurative language, parallelism, appeals to tradition, special formulae, disclaimers of performance, and others) all call attention to performance *per se*. Immanent art, developed by John Miles Foley, builds upon Parry and Lord’s oral-formulaic theory by exploring examples of the agency and creativity of oral-traditional bards. Foley demonstrates how a verbal artist may modulate and even recombine traditional “words”—individual words, phrases, lines, half-lines, themes, type-scenes, and story patterns—for special effect. His research on ancient Greek, South Slavic, and Anglo-Saxon oral traditions also incorporates the findings of performance theory and ethnopoetics to investigate performance, traditional idioms, and translation practices.

At present, scholars and policy makers are concerned about safeguarding traditional cultures threatened by globalization, cataloging “intangible heritages” worldwide, and giving communities the opportunity to define their own traditions and choose the best means to safeguard them. For example, in 2001, a transnational association was founded for the preservation of oral epics: Mezhdunarodnaya Assotsiatsia “Eposy Narodov Mira” (MAEN)/International Association “Epics of the World’s Peoples” (IAEWP). The majority of participants hail from central Asia (Turkey, Iran, Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan, but also Germany and Armenia), where tradition bearers continue to recompose epics in performance. This association addresses those factors that threaten to undermine the ongoing existence of epic traditions. On a global scale, UNESCO’s 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) seeks to support and bring recognition to such cultural heritages as oral tradition, ritual and social practices, traditional knowledge, performing arts, and traditional craftsmanship—domains that inevitably overlap. The UNESCO 2003 Convention asks member nations to amass inventories of their communities’ ICHs, while promoting community-based (versus scholarly) definitions of ICH.

Future directions for the study of oral traditions include preserving the conditions that allow for the continued existence of oral traditions; defining and translating the idiomatic vocabulary (“words” such as phrases, poetic lines and line segments, type-scenes, story patterns, and so on) of a tradition for a reader or listener outside that tradition; the relationship between performance context and genre, and the issue of “gentrification” in folklore studies; hybrid oral and literary works of verbal art; contributions from cognitive science concerning memory

and performance; cultural studies approaches that question the relationship between tradition and political authority; and many more. Volume 18 of the journal *Oral Tradition* offers a collection of short articles written by more than eighty scholars addressing the state of the field with respect to individual traditions worldwide.

Heather Maring

See Also Ethnopoetics; Historic-Geographic Method; Legend; Literary Approach; Myth; Performance; Proverb; Romantic Nationalism; Storytelling; Structuralism.

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Organizational Folklore

Forms and examples of folklore as instances of organizing, folklore about organizations, and folklore originating in the organizational workplace. An organization comes into being when two or more people communicate and contribute action to accomplish a common purpose. Many instances of games and play, festive events and celebrations, and picketing with slogans and singing exemplify spontaneous organization. Increasingly, folklorists document and analyze the

organizational processes in religious activities, ethnic display events, and customs or rituals involving food, especially in “temporary communities.” One study of the Passover seder considers how foodways and ritual can determine *communitas* and define who in a family exercises control, who the guests really are, and ultimately, who is and is not “family.” Another describes behavior of people on soup night, a contemporary small-group festive gathering, suggesting implications for better understanding the tension and balance between individual and shared power as well as the process by which a sense of community and group identity is generated. A third focuses on an annual family clambake, exploring how celebrations often serve as instruments for community, fellowship, and intimacy achieved, in part, through leadership, teamwork, joking behavior, and the sharing of knowledge about the tradition.

The overwhelming presence and impact of formal institutions in people’s lives—schools, utility companies, law enforcement, government at all levels, the entertainment industry, the workplace, and purveyors of consumer goods—have produced a spate of stories, rumors, jokes, sayings, and even terms (“Ma Bell,” “Mickey Mouse” products). Many narratives revolve around the quality of service, including the difficulties posed by the absence of sales personnel in large discount stores, the slowness of the postal system, and the problems of communicating with computers (such as the bill for \$0.00 for which the customer is dunned until he or she finally sends a check in that amount). Stories describing the flood of gobbledygook, foul-ups in paper shuffling, obscure offices (and people) with no present function, and glutted warehouses indict government or other institutions with inefficiency, wastefulness, or ineptitude.

Numerous legends and rumors concern big business or particular corporations. Historically, attitudes toward the businessperson in American folklore have ranged from resentment or hostility toward merchants and bankers to viewing the traveling peddler with an admixture of condescension and sympathy and according respect toward the petty capitalist master-worker employer (the individual entrepreneur working alongside his or her employees). The portrait of business organizations today is ambiguous, and peoples’ feelings about these institutions are ambivalent. Some accounts depict a careless organization, as in stories describing bottles of Coca-Cola or other brands of soft drink contaminated with decomposed mice, cigarette butts, or putrid peanuts. Others portray a dangerous or deceptive organization, for example, alleging that Kool-Aid is carcinogenic, that Pop Rocks explode, that Corona Beer has been urinated in by Mexican workers, that the garments made in the Third World and sold in discount stores are infested with snakes, and so on. Another image is the evil organization as presented in accounts about religious cults kidnapping prospective members and allegations that certain corporations are linked with extremist groups (Arm & Hammer, Proctor & Gamble, and Exxon with satanists; Adolph

Coors Company with the American Nazi Party; and Uncle Ben's Rice and Church's Fried Chicken with the Ku Klux Klan). A fourth image sketches the beneficent organization, particularly in redemption rumors claiming that a certain company will purchase expensive medical equipment (a dialysis machine, an iron lung) for a needy child if customers send discarded items such as cigarette packages, the pull tabs from aluminum cans, or the tags from tea bags.

Folklorists have documented and analyzed such stories, hypothesizing that some reflect major structural changes in society as communities move from self-sufficiency to dependency on large, impersonal organizations, which generate anxieties or fears expressed symbolically (e.g., legends about "Kentucky Fried Rat" in which a patron of a fast food franchise discovers a crispy coated rodent in the bucket of chicken because of unsanitary conditions or a prank by a disgruntled employee). Other accounts may convey concern over an invasion of foreign goods and threats to a country's economy by competitors abroad (allegations of contaminated, defective, or dangerous products from Third World countries). Some likely involve transference (the redemption rumors can assuage feelings of guilt over unhealthful habits). Whether or not accounts are based on actual experience, they are significant in their pervasiveness.

Folklore also pervades the organizational workplace. Much of photocopier lore focuses on points of strain inherent in formal organizations, occasioned by institutional controls, supervision, and structure at the expense of individual freedom and personal power. The familiar drawing of a person with an enormous screw through the midriff and the caption "Work hard and you shall be rewarded" communicates the feelings that organizational life can produce much too easily. Fake memos, usually ascribed to the personnel office, set forth changes in policies. For example, one describes a new restroom trip policy limiting use of facilities to twice a day and warning of a thirty-second buzzer that will sound before the roll of paper automatically retracts, the toilet flushes, and the stall door opens. Another informs employees of a forced early retirement plan called RAPE (Retire Aged Personnel Early). A third presents a new sick leave policy stating that a physician's statement will no longer be accepted as proof ("if you are able to go to the doctor, you are able to come to work") and that death will not be accepted as an excuse for absence unless it is the employee's own (in which case, "we would like a two-week notice as we feel it is your duty to train someone else for your job"). Sometimes, photocopier lore evincing criticism circulates sub rosa; on other occasions, members of an organization openly display it (feeling, perhaps, that it refers to the larger organization but not their department or to other institutions but, thankfully, not their own).

Many people decorate their work area with mementos, posters, postcards, cartoons, photocopier lore, or other items. Placement may be as important as content in regard to function (whether something expressing criticism is hidden or in

public view, where items that one looks at for diversion or reverie are located, and so on). The nature and extent of personalization reveals a great deal about the individual, management attitudes, and organizational climate.

In addition, much talk (illustrated with numerous stories) about beating the system, engaging in prohibited behavior, and so forth suggests worker dissatisfaction. The presence of celebratory events, festive occasions (such as birthday parties), joking, and food sharing signal cordial relations, cooperativeness, and ready communication. Recounting oft-told tales about a worker insulting an impudent customer, getting back at a supervisor, or violating rules and regulations express frustrations and serves as a means of coping with stress. Stories about critical incidents in the organization's history can reveal beliefs about the institution and its environment as well as the organization's preparedness for and responsiveness to change. Traditional expressions and metaphors often encapsulate values and influence perceptions, decisions, and actions; consider, for example, cowboy management metaphors ("earning his spurs," "gunning for the opposition," "a Smith & Wesson beats four aces") that justify extreme behavior, in contrast to what is conveyed by frequent reference to "family," "teams," or "nurturing." In sum, stories, ceremonies, rituals, rites of passage, festive events, play, metaphorical language, and other examples of folklore in organizational settings may instruct, persuade, entertain, express the ambiance of the workplace, help an individual cope, protect personal integrity, stimulate a sense of community, guide decision making and action, reinforce factionalism, and help or hinder organizational effectiveness. Folklore can serve the researcher as a source of information, a diagnostic tool to uncover problems and their causes, and a means of improving organizational functioning and the conditions under which people labor.

Michael Owen Jones

See Also Occupational Folklife/Folklore.

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P

Paradigmatic/Syntagmatic

Distinctive dimensions of linguistic structure applicable to phonology, grammar, and other aspects of language, including folklore forms. As defined by linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, the syntagmatic relationship between elements in language refers to their occurrence in a linear sequence. An element's meaning depends upon its place in the sequence. The syntagmatic relationship (sometimes referred to as *diachronic*) may be represented by a series of words strung out along a horizontal axis. The paradigmatic relationship (sometimes called *synchronic*) refers to the association between all elements that could fill a particular place in a sequence—for example, words with the same grammatical function or the same or similar denotation. Words stacked up and down a vertical axis may represent paradigmatic relationships.

Syntagmatic and paradigmatic distinctions help to differentiate two approaches to the structuralist study of folklore, especially narratives. The perspective associated principally with Russian formalism—manifested in Vladimir Propp's morphological analysis of the folktale—treats structure from a syntagmatic perspective. Propp identified a sequence of thirty-one actions that constitute the Russian wonder tale. These actions always occur in the same order, even if some are omitted. Each action, no matter what character in the narrative performs it, takes its meaning from its sequential position. Propp's syntagmatic approach to Russian folktale structure contributed to Alan Dundes's identification of recurrent syntagmatic patterns in Native American folktales. Dundes and others have also analyzed non-narrative genres, including proverbs and riddles, from a structuralist approach influenced by Propp.

The paradigmatic approach to folk narrative structure has found its fullest expression in the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss, who identified a paradigmatic pattern of mediated binary oppositions underlying the linear structures of myths from North and South America. This paradigm may accommodate a variety of elements. The Zuni creation myth, which attempts to mediate between the oppositions life and death, for example, may do so by substituting other oppositions (such as horticulture and war), which may then be mediated by a single concept, the hunt. Lévi-Strauss's work had less immediate impact on folklore studies than the syntagmatic approach, but examples of other structural analyses of folklore from a paradigmatic perspective include Edmund Leach's treatments of Old Testament narratives and a theory of genres developed by Elli Köngäs-Maranda and

Pierre Maranda. The concept of paradigmatic structure also has influenced work in ethnopoetics by Dell Hymes and others, who have applied it to texts of Native American verbal art. Using an approach he called “verse analysis,” Hymes, for example, discovered repeated patterns in narratives from Native American people along the northwest coast that provide the molds by which storytellers shape their specific performances.

The oral-formulaic theory of Milman Parry and Albert Lord exemplifies the combination of paradigmatic and syntagmatic approaches. On one hand, Parry and Lord argued, epic singers work from syntagmatic outlines of the epics they spontaneously compose. On the other hand, they plug into the outlines various formulas, many of them interchangeable paradigms, that fit the poems’ metrical and narrative needs.

William M. Clements

See Also Diachronic/Synchronic; Ethnopoetics; Folktale; Linguistic Approach; Oral-Formulaic Theory; Structuralism.

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Parody

Parodia, the Greek term from which the English word *parody* derives, is composed of two morphemes, *par-*, which can be translated as “beside, against or

counter,” and *-odia*, meaning song. Hence in its original usage it appears to be a type of song that imitates another song for humorous effect. The important point is that the listener or audience is able to recognize the pale reflection of the more serious original in the imitation. As Humberto Eco notes in *Carnival!* “the law [meaning in this case the song, narrative, etc.] must be so pervasively and profoundly introjected as to be overwhelmingly present at the moment of its violation” (1984, 6). Or as any standup comedian knows, it’s always helpful to have a straight man.

This process can be seen clearly in the Mexican *coloquios* or traditional nativity plays described by Bauman (1996, 318). Here the parody is effected by enabling the audience to hear both the narrator or prompter’s rendition of a written, religious text (the straight verse) and the actor’s parodic counterstatement, a type of word play in which syntactic and phonological parallelism foreground humorous semantic differences. For example, while the prompter states, “It appears that I am getting out without losing a step” (*Parece que voy saliendo sin perder una pisada*), the Hermitano, the parodic figure of the drama, remarks, “Now I am getting used to it without missing even a single fuck.” (*Ya me estoy poniendo sin perder ni una pisada.*)

Parody is, of course, no longer limited to song if it ever was. It can be found in all of the arts and the humanities—literature, painting, poetry, theatre, dance, and more recently in film. One that readily comes to mind is Charlie Chaplin’s *The Great Dictator*, which ridiculed Adolf Hitler through exaggerated imitation of the Fuhrer’s violent gestures and shrill tone. An oft-cited theatrical example is Tom Stoppard’s *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, an absurdist drama first staged in 1966, which borrows two minor characters from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* and turns tragedy into comedy.

Ironically, some literary parodies, such as *Don Quixote*, live on long after the work on which it was based; *Amadis de Gaula*, has been forgotten. Moreover, thanks to new technologies that allow us to juxtapose photographic images, visual parodies that require few if any words can be found all over the Internet. One famous or infamous example, depending on your political perspective, is the side-by-side photos of George Bush and a variety of chimpanzees that appeared sometime after the 2000 election. Although the person who designed the Web site claimed he was not politically motivated—he supposedly just thought Bush looked like an ape—the author’s intentions are probably less important than the reader’s response.

Among the “folk,” parodies not only abound during carnival, but also during the “profane” activities that precede or follow processions held in honor of the patron saint of a town or village. On September 29, following the mass said in honor of St. Michael the Archangel, the patron saint of Maxcanú, Mexico, the congregants pour into the street behind the church and reassemble in their

respective *cofradías* (religious brotherhoods). Once in place, the image of St. Michael is lowered from his pedestal and set on an altar at the front of the procession. Then, with the utmost solemnity, an altar boy leads the procession, swinging a ball of incense. Close behind are the priest and four litter bearers who agonize in silence under the tremendous weight of the altar and image, for this is an act of penitence. From the church the procession enters the main square, silently circles the plaza in a slow, deliberate manner and returns to the starting point marking the end of the “pilgrimage.” After a rosary is recited, the patron saint is returned to his pedestal.

However, in nearby San Bernardo, the hallowed *santa procesión* (procession of the saints) becomes the object of humor in the *k'ub pol*, or dance of the pig, which occurs on St. Bernard's special day in liturgical cycle. The similarity between the *santa procesión* and the San Bernardo *k'ub pol* is revealed through a series of indexical relationships: the raiment of the pig with jewelry (e.g., earrings) and ornaments in emulation of Catholic images that must be properly dressed before they go out in public; the placement of the finely manicured beast on a portable altar similar to those used to carry religious images; her association with the images of St. Anthony of Padua, the Virgin of the Conception and St. Bernard in the corner of the hacienda's outdoor shelter, and, finally, her incorporation into the procession that enters the church. Indeed, the procession that Luis Pérez Sabido witnessed in San Bernardo in 1974 included the three Catholic saints named herein as well as a two hundred kilo pig (1983, 140).

At the same time, the satirical nature of the *k'ub pol* is revealed through a series of paradigmatic shifts: the insertion of a raucous shoving contest in place of the dignified pilgrimage described previously, the cascades of laughter and shouting in lieu of silence, and, of course, the substitution of a raw, corpulent beast for a handsomely carved wooden saint.

The most seditious act, however, is the recitation of vulgar Maya/Spanish quatrains or *bombas* during the procession of the saints. The latter, in fact, is doubly subversive since they not only evoke the festive image of the *jarana* (a sensuous, colorful folk dance) in what would normally be an extremely solemn affair, but debase the refined character of the Spanish *cuarteta* (quatrain) itself. The *bomba's* predictable rhyme scheme, consistent meter, and long association with genteel courtship rituals have, in recent years, become so attractive to the Yucatecan middle class that its poetic form is now frequently used in advertising jingles on television. Urban consumers are entreated to purchase anise liquor and other goods through clever *bombas*. However, in the *k'ub pol*, the quatrain is irreparably damaged. Its gentle sexual allusions are rendered overt, and its poetic form

A scene from *Don Quixote*, Miguel de Cervantes's great tale of adventure published in 1605. (Library of Congress)



is distorted almost beyond recognition as the drunken leader stumbles through each verse.

Oxp'e dia ma' haantken tinwatan
Mix inwatan tsenken xan
Yaan tun kubo'otik bin up'ax
 [inaudible] *ko'olibi bo'otik xan*

(Translated from Yukatek Maya by author).

For three days my wife doesn't eat me
 Nor does my wife feed me either
 She must, then, pay the debt she owes
 [inaudible] the virgin pays it too

Another type of parody that should be of interest to folklorists is the newly revised folktales that have flooded the market in recent years. For functionalist ethnographers like Bronislaw Malinowski and Margaret Park Redfield the purpose of folk literature was simply to reinforce community norms. In the *Folk Literature of a Yucatecan Town*, for example, Park Redfield notes that

the *ejemplo* or example, a more or less true story, was a tool for teaching children to avoid saying inappropriate things. “People said that I had twins because the children had two fathers. But God punished them for talking this way. It is not good to talk about other people, and so these same women had twins too” (1937, 26).

In contrast, revised folktales, like Bob Hartman’s *The Wolf Who Cried Boy* (2004), Susan Meddaugh’s *Cinderella’s Rat* (1997), Simon Puttock’s *Big Bad Wolf Is Good* (2002), Jon Scieszka’s *The True Story of the Big Bad Wolf* (1999), and my favorite, Eugene Trivizas’s *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig* (1993), show little concern about upholding community standards or maintaining wholesome “family values.” The goal may be to question the nature of stereotypes, poke fun, raise contemporary political issues, or simply use an old story to create a new one.

In Trivizas’s revision of the Three Little Pigs, for example, the roles are entirely reversed. Three tender, fluffy wolves seek refuge from a maniacal pig by building successively stronger houses. Beginning with brick, they move on to reinforced concrete, and, finally, a house made out of iron bars, armor plates, and heavy metal padlocks. Pig, however, is able to destroy all of them with the help of a sledge hammer, a pneumatic drill, and dynamite. The wolves are saved only by the beautiful scent of flowers they get from Flamingo. The scent is so enticing that Pig sniffs and sniffs until he decides to become a good pig, and he and the wolves become friends. Trivizas’s tale may very well be a belated celebration of flower power as Amie Doughty argues in *Folk Tales Retold* (2006). However, as a child of Dr. Seuss and the *Butter Bean War*, I can’t help but see a comment on the massive growth of prisons or the Star Wars Defensive Initiative—both of which were costly and controversial issues in the 1990s—and an admonition that we will either learn to live together or we will surely die together.

The relationship between the original tale and the revised tale, of course, varies from tale to tale. In some cases, the original is retold with a few new twists or a different ending; in other cases, as in *Cinderella’s Rat*, minor characters are elevated to major characters to create a “new” tale. In either case, however, it is the intertextual play between the old and the new that lends rhetorical force to the tale and helps it succeed.

Although parody is often used to address social or political issues of the day, not all parodies are satires, and not all satires involve parody. Satire often involves a variety of different rhetorical devices such as sarcasm, irony, burlesque, and innuendo, and may or may not be parodic. The question that is more difficult to answer is whether parody must be humorous. In the last year or so,

side-by-side images comparing the mistreatment of the Jews by the Nazis and the mistreatment of Palestinians by Israelis have been circulating on the Internet. Although the juxtaposition of these images can be viewed as poignant, provocative, or even inflammatory, neither side views them as humorous.

Ronald Loewe

See Also Asian American Humor and Folklore; Carnival; Folktale; Joke.

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Participant-Observation Method

The method typically employed in conducting field research. This method, as it has been applied by folklorists, traces its origins to anthropology, which developed the technique in an effort to conduct thorough and reliable ethnographic research in the field by requiring field-workers to be both participants in a target community and objective observers who translated their participant experience

into a formalized summary. The method's goal is to account for the subject's point of view within a general theoretical framework.

The participant-observation method necessitates a long-term approach, for it usually takes field-workers an extended period of time in order to become functioning members of the target community. Until the researcher achieves this status, the data obtained by using the method will reflect an abnormal routine since the target community is likely to change its routines when outsiders impose on or cross its boundaries. These anomalies will appear for a number of reasons, including the suspicion of the field researcher and strangers in general, the attempt to hide secrets from the outsider, the fear of being mocked because of so-called primitive ways, and the desire to remain insulated from the forces of change. However, once the field-worker becomes accepted by the target community and is allowed to participate in its daily affairs, he or she is able to accumulate data from which an accurate ethnography can be written or a particular problem can be studied.

Although the researcher must become accepted by the target community for this method to be productive, complete acceptance is rare. Furthermore, it is useful for the researcher to maintain some distance from the target group so that the second dimension of the method, the observation, can be undertaken with as much integrity and objectivity as possible. Nonobjective observations result in data that cannot be verified; therefore, they are useless except as commentary on the field researcher's experience itself.

Proponents of the participant-observation method have recognized the need to reconsider some of the basic premises surrounding the approach. Primary among the assumptions that must be questioned is the idea that field researchers can be objective, for field-workers themselves are born into situations that imbue them with particular ways of perceiving, with particular agendas, and with particular biases. Many field-workers, in response to this situation, make their reflexivity, the revelation of themselves, a strength of the research by providing their audience with data that aids in interpreting their work. Additionally, these field-workers are acknowledging the voice of the Other as a significant factor in the participant-observation method. This voice—which is not only the voice of the subjects being studied but the field-worker's voice as well—is made manifest in the presentation of the field research, and it acknowledges that the field-worker's objective observation is always incomplete. This incompleteness implies that understanding and interpretation emerge from participation in the experience itself, and accurate representation will result only from the field-worker's acknowledgment that participation is nonrepresentational in any objective sense.

Charlie T. McCormick

See Also Fieldwork.

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Pennsylvania Dutch Folklore

A widespread North American ethnic group, also known as Pennsylvania Germans, with roots in the colonial British colonies. Beginning in 1683, with the foundation of Germantown, German-speaking emigrants from Central Europe flooded into Philadelphia, settling in Southeastern Pennsylvania, from whence they occupied additional areas of Pennsylvania. Their culture area, usually called the Pennsylvania Dutch Country, covered approximately one-third of Pennsylvania's total area, the exact equivalent of the geographical area of Switzerland. From Pennsylvania, diaspora settlements were planted in the Upland South as far as the Carolinas, northward into Ontario and New Brunswick, and directly west, into many areas of the Midwestern and Plains states. The emigration from Europe of Pennsylvania Dutch ancestral families continued until about the close of the Napoleonic Wars in Europe, or the Treaty of Paris that settled the American War of 1812, in 1815.

The European areas that produced the emigrants to colonial Pennsylvania centered in the Rhineland, and involved German, Swiss, and French Huguenot emigrants, as well as significant groups from a wider periphery—the Moravian Brethren from Saxony, the Schwenkfelders from Silesia, and many Austrian Protestant refugee families. The culture that the Pennsylvania Dutch created on American soil was a sturdy American hybrid culture, blending Continental European with British Isles and American cultural traits. So creative was this culture that Southeastern Pennsylvania is considered in cultural geographical terminology an American “culture hearth,” influencing other regions of early America with material culture elements such as the Pennsylvania bank bar, the Pennsylvania rifle, and the Conestoga wagon. In addition, Pennsylvania Dutch religious



A rural red barn with Pennsylvania Dutch hex signs. (Cynthia Farmer/Dreamstime.com)

patterns, both churchly and sectarian, were planted in all the diaspora settlements. The German language was spread via sermon, everyday speech, and print (newspapers, books, and broadsides). In all the diaspora areas, Pennsylvania Dutch foods and foodways, customs of the year, and other folkloric elements spread widely with the transplanted Dutchmen of the nineteenth century: Pennsylvania's manuscript art called "fraktur," its legacy of fantastic quilt patterns on the distaff side, traditional pottery, and, for those who can appreciate it, that vast store of native wit and humor, folksongs, folktales, and other folkloric elements, preserved in the dialect, now properly a language, called Pennsylvania Dutch.

Research Survey

America's rediscovery of itself through the trauma of the Civil War and the centennial of the American Revolution in 1876 with the unparalleled Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, exercised a catalytic effect in all American ethnic groups, including the Pennsylvania Dutch. With the upswing in ethnic pride that produced such late nineteenth-century institutions as the Scotch-Irish Society

(1888) for the Ulster heritage, the Welcome Society (1889) for Pennsylvania Quakers, the Pennsylvania Dutch followed in 1891 with their own Pennsylvania German Society. The intellectuals among the founders of this society—ministers, lawyers, and others—were influenced also by the national foundation of the American Folklore Society in 1898, which brought the concept of “folklore” in the British Thomsian sense, with its division into “genres,” to the attention of several native Pennsylvania Dutch scholars, who began to apply the concepts to their own culture. Among these was Dr. Walter J. Hoffman of the Smithsonian Institution, whose folkloric surveys of Pennsylvania Dutch culture appeared in the *Journal of American Folklore* in its very first volume (1888–1889). This influence of the American Folklore Society on selected scholars continued in the work of John Baer Stoudt, whose seminal work, *The Folklore of the Pennsylvania Germans*, appeared in 1916. The pioneer work of such scholars as Marion Dexter Learned and his pupil and successor Edwin M. Fogel at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia furthered the cause, with Dr. Learned’s ethnographic questionnaires (the first in the nation) focused on folksongs and other genres of Pennsylvania Dutch folklore, in 1899–1900, followed by Dr. Fogel’s equally seminal volumes on Pennsylvania Dutch folk beliefs, proverbs, and “superstitions.”

The discovery of “Elizabethan” balladry existing in Appalachia spurred on much work on the Pennsylvania Dutch folksong traditions, with a Dutch Country-wide recording of dialect folksongs by Thomas R. Brendle, reformed clergyman, and William S. Troxell, Allentown journalist and prolific producer of dialect literature under the pen name of “Pumpernickle Bill.” A selection of their recordings appeared in George Korson’s *Pennsylvania Songs and Legends* (1949), although the first complete book on the subject, *Songs along the Mahan-tongo*, appeared in 1951.

In the 1930s, centering in Allentown and Lehigh County, a strong dialect-speaking area, a renaissance of Pennsylvania Dutch studies began that extended into the people’s sector with dialect radio programs, dialect church services, and the invention of the “Grundsow Lodch” (Groundhog Lodge)—an all-dialect evening banquet and performance where amid the festivity and feasting, one was fined for speaking English! At the same time, the team of Preston A. Barba and Harry S. Reichard, both dialect-speaking professors of German at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pennsylvania, produced Dr. Barba’s long-lasting (1936–1969) weekly newspaper column, ‘*S Pennsylvawnisch Diesch Eck* (The Pennsylvania Dutch Corner), which is a treasure trove of folklore as well as historical material. Dr. Reichard also joined the Lehigh County folk artist and dialect playwright Paul R. Wieand in a weekly radio dialect skit called “Assebe and Sabeina,” reporting very

amusingly on the ups and downs in the life of a typical Dutch farmer and his wife and their circle of archetypical Dutch friends.

At the same time in the 1930s, the folk festival movement was brought to Pennsylvania by George Korson, America's first industrial folklorist. In 1935, he began the Pennsylvania Folk Festival at Allentown, which later moved to Bucknell University at Lewisburg in central Pennsylvania. These festivals featured Pennsylvania Dutch singing groups, Conestoga waggoners, miners' songs, and other products of Pennsylvania's rich ethnic heritage. This led eventually to the Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festival at Kutztown, founded in 1950 and still going strong sixty years later.

The ethnographic work begun at Franklin and Marshall College at Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in 1949 by the research triumvirate of Alfred L. Shoemaker, J. Willim Frey, and Don Yoder, led to the establishment of the journal *The Pennsylvania Dutchmen* (1949; it became *Pennsylvania Folklife* in 1968), the Pennsylvania Dutch Folklore Center (1949; which was incorporated in 1958 as the Pennsylvania Folklife Society), and the Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festival at Kutztown (1950). This concerted approach united all phases of Pennsylvania Dutch folklore, but broadened it into the European "folklife" approach, using both current ethnography (interviews and questionnaires) and historical ethnography (using historical documentation to reconstruct past levels of the culture). The "folklife studies movement," which began in America with the work of these three scholars, has had a wide influence on the American folklore research scene, with the establishment of such national institutions as the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress and the Folklife Program of the Smithsonian Institution.

Folksong Research

The first genre of Pennsylvania Dutch folklore to be investigated thoroughly was the folksong. The culture's song repertoire represented three historical strands. First are the songs, jingles, and rhymes that are so widespread they were obviously brought to Pennsylvania in the memories of the eighteenth-century emigrants. The second layer, drinking songs and other amusing genres, were evidently brought here by the nineteenth-century emigrants and spread through the countryside by itinerants like the colorful *Fritter mit der Zitter*—a zither-playing emigrant-German tramp who sang often raunchy songs in the country taverns—veritable men's clubs of the culture—until his lamented death, reported in the Lebanon County newspapers in 1880. This tradition of the lone singer-entertainer continued into the twentieth century, represented by such memorable

figures as Willy Brown of Klingerstown in Schuylkill County, whose songs—such as those sung in the Klingerstown tavern to audiences of Dutch farmers and workmen—I recorded half a century ago, along with some of his traditional folktales. The third category of Pennsylvania Dutch folksongs includes those composed in America, often sung to American pop culture tunes. These chronicle local characters like “Bully Lyons,” a nineteenth-century Reading constable. Other songs sided with Democrats or Republicans in the nineteenth-century gubernatorial political campaigns.

The ballad repertoire of the culture also was spread by individual singers like the slightly aberrant Polly Schrob of Pine Grove in Schuylkill County, who in the early decades of the nineteenth century had her songs printed as broadsides, for sale in the towns where she performed. Schoolmasters of the German parochial church schools were the usual authors of the German-language ballads, songs of murder and suicide, and unrequited love, all with a heavily accented moral warning in the last verses. These tragedy songs usually were printed as broadsides, and sold by the schoolmasters to eke out their meager wages as teachers.

Ballads were also sung in the family circle, often by the grandmothers, to warn the children against following the path trod by Susanna Cox or Wicked Polly. And there is evidence that some of the grandmothers accompanied their singing on the Pennsylvania Dutch zither.

The “Susanna Cox” ballad was written in 1809 to chronicle the hanging in Reading of a twenty-four-year-old hired servant on an Oley Valley farm. This unfortunate soul had a bastard child, did away with it, and was discovered and sentenced to death. Her death was witnessed by the largest crowd that had ever gathered in Berks County’s capital of Reading, and the song went through over a hundred different broadside printings in German and English. One memorable day in 1961, at the Pennsylvania Dutch Folk Festival at Kutztown, I was able to hear, and record, the singing of the original German ballad—all thirty-two verses and to the original tune—as remembered by a ninety-year-old farm wife from Lehigh County.

For the folktale repertoire of the Pennsylvania Dutch culture, see the pioneering treatment by Thomas R. Brendle and William S. Troxell, *Pennsylvania German Folk Tales, Legends, Once-upon-a-Time Stories, Maxims and Sayings Spoken in the Dialect Popularly Known as Pennsylvania Dutch* (1946). Unfortunately, the tales are given only in English translation, not in their original recorded dialect form.

Additional folktale materials center around the many “characters” the Dutch culture has produced—the hermits who rejected human society, the powwow doctors, the alleged witches, and yes, even the “saints” like “Mountain Mary”

(*Die Berg-Maria*, Maria Jung) of the Oley Hills, whose benevolence to her neighbors, her freely given healing procedures, and other virtues were noted and written about throughout the nineteenth century long after her death in 1819.

Finally, the folktale repertoire of the Pennsylvania Dutch was often mirrored in the local color fiction by such early twentieth-century writers as Elsie Singmaster, especially in the volume *Bred in the Bone* (1925), Fred Lewis Pattee's *The House of the Black Ring*, and even some of Henry W. Shoemaker's books, although many have found his attempts to write about folklore too fictionalized for the taste of an academic folklorist.

The numerous collections of folktale recordings by individual scholars, most of them unpublished, deserve to be surveyed, and more recording needs to be pursued while significant numbers of Pennsylvania Dutchmen still speak full and perfect Dutch. Also, more of the printed literature of the culture, especially from the nineteenth- and twentieth-century newspapers, needs to be culled for folktale materials.

Proverbial Lore

Proverb research among the Pennsylvania Dutch was largely initiated by Edwin Miller Fogel of the University of Pennsylvania, with his *Beliefs and Superstitions of the Pennsylvania Germans* (1915). Fogel's materials were gathered by interviews in the Dutch Country, and then collated with the European proverb collections. Typical of the times is the fact that Fogel omitted from his book a substantial corpus of "erotic" materials, which he allowed to appear in a "Supplement" (1915) "for private distribution, not for public perusal." The translations of the Pennsylvania Dutch originals appeared in decorous Latin. Inevitably, the "Supplement" found its way into print, the Latin rendered into very readable English.

In 1925, Dr. Fogel's major proverb collection, *Proverbs of the Pennsylvania Germans*, appeared. This was reprinted later in the century in two different annotated editions, by Wolfgang Mieder, proverb scholar of the University of Vermont, and C. Richard Beam of Millersville University.

Proverbs and proverbial sayings exist by the thousands in the literature of the Pennsylvania Dutch people, whether in dialect, High German, or English, and a concerted effort to cull them from the printed sources and record them from living speakers of Pennsylvania Dutch is overdue.

Folk Medicine

Pennsylvania's most distinctive form of folk medicine is the ancient procedure called in English "powwowing" or "powwow medicine." The term *powwow*

itself is from an Algonquin word that, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, came over into English in New England in the 1640s. It was used first for Indian healers and healing procedures, then applied to the colonial healers. While the practice was once universal in the states, under various names, the Pennsylvania Dutch culture would seem to be its center and fountainhead today.

While certain Indian herbal remedies were appropriated and used by the colonial white settlers, the name alone is the only element of powwowing that has any connection with the American Indians. Powwow medicine involves the use of magical formulas (*Zauberformeln* in German) brought from Central Europe by the emigrants. The charms were put into print, and therefore canonized, by the 1802 emigrant John George Hohman (Homan), whose book *Der Lang Verborgene Freund* (usually translated “The Long Lost Friend”) appeared at Reading, Pennsylvania, in 1819/1820, and spread widely.

The Pennsylvania Dutch word for powwowing is *Brauche* or *Braucherei*, and for powwow practitioners, *Braucher*. Synonyms in English include “to use” and “to try for,” although my most important powwow contact, Sophia Bailer of Tremont in Schuylkill County, preferred “calling a blessing on” the patient.

In the past few decades, there have been several new and novel developments in the field of powwow medicine. The proliferation of “Indian Readers” and “Healers by Prayer” in the Eastern cities following World War II also has been registered in the Dutch country. Several of these practitioners have subtly added the word *powwow* to their printed advertisements, usually broadsides, distributed in parking lots and other city venues to attract susceptible Dutchmen to their services.

There also seems to be an upswing in the number of practicing powwow doctors, several of whom have written books describing and defending their healing techniques. It appears also that some of the newer, younger practitioners have been reading anthropological literature, since they are attributing their therapeutic powers to a “soul journey” similar to those claimed by the Asian shamans. Such claims, of course, were never part of the classic powwower’s understanding of his craft.

Folk Religion

The Pennsylvania Dutch essentially was a Protestant culture. In its own terminology, it was divided down the middle into “churchmen” and “sectarians.” The churchmen included the major denominations of the Protestant Reformation, the Lutherans and the Reformed. The sectarians, led by the Mennonites and their stricter offshoot the Amish, included the Church of Brethren (Dunkards), the River Brothers, and the Schwenkfelders. There were, in addition, revivalist sects modeled on Methodism—the United Brethren, the Evangelical Association, and

the Church of God, and their late nineteenth-century offspring the Holiness groups. In between the *Kirchenleute* and the *Sektenleute* were the Moravians, or *Herrnhuter*, who operated with episcopacy and liturgical services, but originally were communitarian. Finally, there were two strictly defined communitarian groups, the Ephrata Cloister and the Harmony Society.

Apart from these organized, official forms of Pennsylvania Dutch religion, there existed vast areas of folk religion or folk spirituality—beliefs and customs held by the people but not necessarily condoned or applauded by the clergy. A prime example is the document, usually printed as a broadside, called the *Himmelsbrief* or Heaven-Letter. Said to have been written by Jesus himself and sent down to earth mysteriously, the text gives a kind of Protestantized version of the Ten Commandments, urging the hallowing of Sunday as the Sabbath, avoidance of fancy dress, pride, and so forth. But the document had a magical side and attraction that has kept it in print into this century. It specifically states that anyone who copies it and spreads it will be blessed, and whoever keeps it in his blouse or on his person will be safe from flood, pestilence, and violent death. The letters were carried by Pennsylvania Dutch soldiers in all of America's wars from the Revolution on, and printed in innumerable editions, in German or English, by upstate country printers.

But folk religion involves more than personal and household protection. Practical matters involved seating in the churches and burial patterns in the churchyards. Since the Pennsylvania Dutch individual, as in European peasant society, was in earlier days subsumed under the community concept, men and women sat apart in the churches, not in family groups as today, and the dead were buried not in family plots, as today, but in the time slot beside the last community member buried. In the older cemeteries, the dead were buried facing eastward, symbolically toward the rising sun of the Resurrection morning.

On the negative side, the Pennsylvania Dutch folk worldview included, as did every ethnic community of early America, a strong belief in witchcraft, the transfer of evil from person to person by occult means. Every Dutch community has nineteenth-century stories of persons accused of witchcraft and their devious, devil-inspired doings—plus stories of how one countered witchcraft by going to the local “witch doctor” (*Hexe-Doktor*) for a written country charm. See Richard M. Dorson's *Buying the Wind* for several examples of witch tales recorded from a believer in the 1950s, including the classic Central Pennsylvania folktale “The Bewitched Automobile.”

Customs of the Year

The folklore patterns of the Pennsylvania Dutch people included numerous colorful customs of the year, some of which have influenced the larger American

scene. The principal examples are Christmas and Easter customs. The first American evidence for both the Christmas tree and the Easter rabbit come from Pennsylvania sources. However, the Pennsylvania Dutch Christmas involved many more folkloric elements in the past. The modern Santa Claus was absent from the earlier Pennsylvania Dutch Christmas celebration. In his place were the gift-giver, the Christ-Child (Pennsylvania Dutch *Grischkindel*), who left gifts for the children, unseen, during the night, and the frightening Belsnickel, of which there were two varieties.

On Christmas Eve, the father of the house, often masked and dressed in tattered clothing, went outside, tapped on the window, was let in, scattered nuts and candy on the floor, and when his children scurried to pick them up, gave them a token switching, all in fun. But the Belsnickel concept had other dimensions—in some cases groups of masked and sometimes cross-dressed teenagers and unmarried young people went around from farm to farm on Christmas Eve, put on various acts, and collected goodies that were divided at the end of the circuit. Most frequently, these bands of masked and curiously dressed people paraded or rode into the neighboring towns on “Second Christmas,” the day after Christmas, or on New Year’s Day. This satisfied the human yen for dressing up and masking, which other Americans confined to Halloween, and in Europe, to Fastnacht (Shrove Tuesday). Striking photographs of troops of Belsnickels from the period 1900–1915 have recently turned up and have been used to illustrate the third and fiftieth-anniversary edition of Alfred L. Shoemaker’s *Christmas in Pennsylvania*. Alas, the colorful Belsnickel custom has faded from history, and most Pennsylvania Dutch families now honor Santa Claus. The custom, however, occasionally has been revived by local museums, in celebrations called “Belsnickel Days.”

Another custom, now unfortunately gone, is the New Year’s shoot—shooting in the New Year, with the accompanying chanted German blessing. A group of eight to ten men, one with a rifle, circulated to neighboring farms on New Year’s Eve. At each home, after asking permission to shoot, the shot was fired into the winter sky, and then there was the *Neujahrswunch*, blessing the family, the household, the animals in the barn, and extending the blessing to “all of Christendom.” This was a folk-religious ritual that was looked forward to from year to year, and any family that was missed on the rounds was insulted! Recordings exist from traditional “wishers” like Willy Brown, mentioned in the folksong section. A few contemporary Dutchmen, like Peter V. Fritsch of Longswamp Township in Berks County, are carrying on the tradition at the present time.

A third Pennsylvania Dutch holiday celebration, of more recent origin, is “Groundhog Day,” February 2, and has spread widely in the United States and Canada. Known as Candlemas in the medieval European church calendar, the day united two Christian festivals, the Purification of Mary (forty days after the birth of Christ) and the Presentation of Christ in the Jerusalem Temple. In

continental Europe, the day developed into a weather predictor. An animal, the badger (*Dachs*) and originally the sacred bear of the alpine cultures, both hibernators, were believed to issue from their winter quarters on February 2. If the day was sunny and the animal saw its shadow, the winter weather was predicted to continue for six more weeks. If the day was cloudy, rainy, or snowy, and the animal did not see its shadow, this was taken as a sign of an early spring.

The Pennsylvania Dutch brought the custom to America, and lacking badgers, chose the native groundhog or woodchuck in its place, likewise a hibernating animal. There are two Pennsylvania centers of the cult at present—Punxsutawney in Jefferson County in northwestern Pennsylvania, and Quarryville in Lancaster County in southeastern Pennsylvania. In both cases, talented, innovative journalists created the outline of the current holiday through their columns. In Punxsutawney, the movement began in the 1880s, and in Quarryville after 1900. Both centers developed elaborate scenarios—Punxsutawney’s ritual begins at 3 A.M. on Gobbler’s Know outside the city. And, of course, the clever film *Groundhog Day* helped the cause and the custom has now spread to at least twenty-five states and several Canadian provinces. It is a fun and tongue-in-cheek holiday, providing some ritualistic humor in the calendric doldrums between New Year’s Day and Easter.

Recent Developments

There have been three major research developments in the study of Pennsylvania Dutch folklore. Professor C. Richard Beam, founder and director of the Pennsylvania German Center at Millersville University, has recently completed and published his lifetime work, the eleven-volume *Pennsylvania German Dictionary*. This is now the ultimate authority on vocabulary and its usage in Pennsylvania Dutch, besides being full of traditional sayings, proverbial lore, and folklore in general.

Across the Atlantic, the Palatine linguist Dr. Michael Werner of the University of Mainz, Germany, has established an international journal devoted to the Pennsylvania Dutch language. Called *Hiwwe wie Driwwe*, the title—“over here like over there”—reflects the frequent feeling experienced by a Pennsylvania Dutchman in the Central Rhineland, where his language is understood, and the same for the visiting Rhinelanders over here. The journal is entirely in Pennsylvania Dutch, except for occasional letters in High German or English. And the letters are sent from every area in the United States and Canada where Pennsylvania Dutch is still spoken and appreciated.

The third noteworthy item is Kutztown University’s Pennsylvania German Cultural Heritage Center, founded by Dr. David Valuska and now headed by Dr. Robert Reynolds. The center offers academic work, a major in Pennsylvania German Studies with a minor in the language, and a twenty-two-acre open air

museum of Pennsylvania Dutch folklife on the northern edge of the university campus. Plans for a major research library are in the works, and numerous research projects in Pennsylvania Dutch folklife have been outlined and commissioned.

Pennsylvania Dutch folklore will continue to be an important regional component of American folklore even after the culture has shifted linguistically from Pennsylvania Dutch to English. But fortunately, at the present time, there are sufficient active speakers of Pennsylvania Dutch in Pennsylvania and the diaspora to keep many folk-cultural specialists at work recording and analyzing the multi-layered marvel that has in the last three centuries developed into the Pennsylvania Dutch culture.

Don Yoder

See Also Custom; Ethnic Folklore; Folktale; Medicine, Folk; Religion, Folk.

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Performance

In folklore, a mode of presentation in which a party or parties utilize conventional artistic techniques to stage actions for others. In theory and in method, the concept of performance builds upon the range of meanings the term has in common use. These emphasize actualization versus potentiality, demonstration versus knowledge, ritual versus belief, observable behavior in prescribed circumstances, and, in particular, artistic display in words, music, dance, and drama. In its initial use in folklore scholarship, the term *performance* evoked the gap that exists between presentation and its documentation. William J. Entwistle, for example, associates

mime, music, and dance with performed ballads. For him, they project authenticity and antiquity that are inevitably lost in the printed text or the affectation of drawing room singing. Performance connotes the vigor of delivery that is knowable through experience only. Methodologically, Kenneth S. Goldstein defines *performance* as the occurrence of folklore in its “normal social context” prior to being collected.

The technology of recording and the emerging theories in the humanities and social sciences have contributed to a renewed inquiry into the dynamics of folklore performance. This quest builds upon the concept of orality that has dominated folklore research from its inception and recognizes the primacy of any performed act over any form of its abstracted documentation. It also has recovered the meanings of performed speech associated with such terms as *epic* and *myth* that connote discourse as distinguished from action, colored by its context.

The study of performance has shifted the claims folklore has had on national traditions and histories, on cultural cosmologies, and on social ethos. The notion has been rethought in terms of searching for a dynamic, interactive force in society that is an agent of communication subject to the wills of its performers and to the contingent interpretations of its audiences. From this perspective, folklore no longer studies tradition as a superstructure or as an expression or mirror of national culture but as a set of artistic acts that are an integral part of the fabric of social life and religious and political rituals. The application of the concept of performance to folklore, hence, has transformed its subject from being a cultural metanarrative to becoming acts of narrating, singing, and speaking.

There are two basic assumptions that guide the different approaches to performance analysis. First, is the idea that a society has a set of systemic conventions and rules that regulate and generate folklore acts. Second, is the notion that while speakers are in performance mode, their verbal behavior has an acceptable range of deviance from the common use of language in society. Native speakers, whether performers or listeners, adhere to the rules of performance and to its socially accepted margin of variance. Methodologically, in the presence of an outsider, speakers may heighten the principles of performance or seek to present certain aspects of their culture through the selection of themes, genres, and modes of folkloric display they deem as markers of their ethnic identity.

Ethnography of Performance

The fundamentals of any performance analysis require an adequate ethnographic description of speech acts in a given society, accounting for the reasons and purposes of speaking, the participants and performers in the occasion, and the speech genres they employ. All these aspects of performance are interdependent, and there is a degree of correlation between them that a description must make explicit. Therefore, the description of performance focuses on the relations within the occasion as much as on the nature and meaning of each of its

Catch Question

A type of traditional enigma designed to “catch” the respondent by frustrating expectations. The catch question may exploit syntactic ambiguities: “I saw Esau sitting on a see-saw, how many s’s in that?—None” (the word *that* has no s’s). Or the catch question may use homonyms: “I know three monkeys. One’s called Doh, one’s called Ray. What’s the third one called?—Me.—Oh, I didn’t know you were a monkey.” Or the question may give a personal application to an apparently general question: “What do virgins eat for breakfast?—I don’t know” (thus, the respondent must not be a virgin).

Just as it shifts the frame of reference, the catch question also shifts the performance frame. Its efficacy results from a surprising emergence in another kind of discourse. In the middle of a riddling session, someone asks, “What has four legs, a tail, and barks?” The respondent, expecting a metaphorical or punning solution, ponders, gives up, and at last volunteers, “A dog?” The poser gives a condescending smile and replies, “Oh, you’ve heard that one.” The catch question may break into ordinary conversation: “You know your great-grandfather?—Yes.—No you don’t, he’s dead!” Sometimes, it comes disguised as a clever question with a recondite answer: “Where did King John sign the Magna Carta?—At the bottom.”

The catch question is used to embarrass, obliging the respondent to utter an obscenity, make an unintended admission, or simply appear foolish. It may serve to upset the accepted hierarchy of wit, pulling the rug from under a clever person. Or it may simply introduce variety into a riddling session.

A subtype of the catch question is the mock-obscene or double-entendre riddle, found widely around the world and often in cultures with strict norms of sexual propriety. The mock-obscene riddle presents a question with an apparently sexual solution. The respondent betrays awareness by offering this answer or by blushing; the poser then provides an innocent solution. An example is this Italian riddle: “You stick it in hard, it comes out soft. What is it?—Spaghetti.” Such catches are generally exchanged among children, as a way of introducing a forbidden but endlessly interesting topic, and in cross-gender gatherings of adolescents, among whom, as Anniki Kaivola-Bregenhøj has said, the mock-obscene riddle acts as “kindler of an erotic atmosphere.”

Dorothy Noyes

components. Performances vary in society in terms of the social, religious, and political reasons that generate them and the purposes toward which their performers and participants strive. The qualifications of performers also depend on the needs of each occasion. For example, though a highly structured ritual or a lengthy poetic text requires rigorously trained performers, casual verbal exchanges are accessible to any native speakers with no more than a mild inclination for verbal play. The exploration of the relations within a performance event involves an exposition of the observable characteristics of the performers

and the participants, such as gender and age, as well as those features that require specific inquiry or knowledge. These involve the training of the performer, his or her position in the society (and in any sect or cult organization), and the existence or absence of any patronage system. Also correlated with any performance are the locations and times that a society designates for performance, as well as the genres, themes, and speech modes that are appropriate for each occasion.

Performance as Quality

To a degree, the ethnography of performance adheres to the theoretical and methodological principles of the “ethnography of speaking,” which considers speech as an activity in its own right. Yet the former has a narrower focus in concentrating upon a particular mode of communication. The elucidation of the qualitative nature of performance is central to the understanding of folklore in society. William Hugh Jansen proposes that “performance does not exist until the “doer,” the speaker, or the reciter of the bit of folklore steps outside himself as an individual and assumes a pose toward his audience, however small, that differs from his everyday, every-hour-in-the-day relationship to the same audience.” Theatricality, however minute and fleeting, has become a key quality in the folklore performance. The quality can manifest itself when an individual adopts the role of performer by engaging in conventional behaviors dictated by tradition (e.g., introducing a proverb by “you know what they always say . . . “). Most instances of folklore performance fall between these two minimal and maximal acts, when speakers take upon themselves, for a limited time and on a specific occasion, the role of singers, narrators, and riddlers. In those roles, they assume responsibility for presentation to an audience, as Dell Hymes has said, or they display communicative competence, as Richard Bauman asserts. These two conceptions of performance share the principle of display and involve a transformation of the performing self and a transition from an everyday mode of communication to an exhibitory one.

Performance and Knowledge

The formal and social qualities of performance have been the primary features for its description, so much so that they have obscured the question of its substance. Partially because of the broad thematic range of folklore, as well as its diversity and multifariousness, there is a purposeful vagueness in the discussion of the contents of performances.

To compound matters, the influential terminological use in linguistics that contrasts *performance* with *competence*, setting the terms as two paradigms representing the vagaries of language in speech against its ideal rule-generating symbolic cognitive system, diverted the discussion into a rebuttal of generative

linguistics. Hymes and Charles L. Briggs argue that competence involves mastery of communication that extends beyond the utterance of sentences into the social and cultural rules that generate performance.

Coping with similar issues, albeit not within the discourse of linguistics, Roger D. Abrahams proposes considering performance and enactment as the heightened performance of cultural experiences in rituals and festivals, and John Miles Foley suggests regarding performance as immanent art, displaying the images of the mind. These and other solutions point to a synthesis that encompasses cultural knowledge and experience—as they are available to members of the community in verbal, visual, musical, and mimetic symbolic forms—as the substance of performance. The knowledge accumulated in the collective memory becomes the subject of performance in society. Both the substance and the rules for its communication are essential knowledge for socially responsible performances.

In practice, it is possible to paraphrase or report such cultural knowledge, squeezing out its performative quality, but such an account becomes a secondary representation of the knowledge that is culturally available for performance.

The Languages of Performance

Speakers, narrators, and singers heighten the poetic function of language. On the phonetic level, alliteration, rhyme, and measured speech attain a more prominent position in performance than they would have in common conversation. In fact, one or all of these features could function to highlight a proverb when it occurs in daily conversation.

Parallelism, paired words, and formulas are also used in the language of performance. They could function mnemonically, as Milman Parry and Albert B.



Barney McKenna from the Irish folk group The Dubliners performs at the “Donauinselfest” open-air festival in Vienna, Austria, on June 27, 2010. (AP/Wide World Photos)

Lord have suggested regarding the formula in epic, but their occurrence in a broad range of genres is indicative that they are intrinsic to performance, distinguishing them from everyday discourse. The marking of performance language from everyday discourse has a scale of deviation in which prose narration is most similar to speech and the language of magical formulas is most removed from it, often jumbling sounds into utterances whose meaning is known only to the speaker. On the semantic level, there is an increased use of metaphors, allusions, and quotations that construct the themes in performance into interwoven domains and images that are connected to other principles of “interperformance,” to use Lee Haring’s term. They constitute the narrated, the sung, and the recited cultural experiences and imagined worlds.

The Presentation of Performance

More than any other approach to folklore, the focus on performance has highlighted the gap between experience and its representation. No matter how comprehensive the documentation of performance might be, it cannot replace performance as experience. Any representation of folklore performance implies a selective abstraction of the event as a process. Even the use of audiovisual documentation of performance does not replace the experience itself. Furthermore, observation alone is often insufficient for the comprehension of performance, and inquiry into the meaning of its symbols must follow. Therefore, although all available means to present the experience of performance are welcome, an interpretive analytical narrative that relates its component parts is essential for adequate presentation.

Universals of Performance

The study of folklore performances is grounded in the ethnographic descriptive tradition, yet because such performances occur in societies all over the world, the search for universals is inevitable. Although the definition of a human characteristic as universal logically implies that it has a biological basis, it is possible to describe a behavior as universal without defining its biological foundation in the case of cultural performance.

Victor Turner proposes that performances are universally playful, framed, symbolic, and in the “subjunctive mood”—that is, they assume an “as if” position toward their substance. The applicability of these four features is most appropriate to ritual and drama, yet the features are relevant to verbal genres as well. Narratives require verbal frames that open and conclude them as specific social discourse, and so do songs. In fact, the frames have the capacity of being cultural identity markers for specific genres, indicating to speakers and listeners the attitudes they could assume toward a narration or a song. The performance of other speech genres, such as proverbs, requires at least an introductory formula

that serves as a framing device, distinguishing it from the preceding discourse. The illusionary quality of performance, universal as it is, does not detract, however, from its affective psychological and political power, which can potentially have real rather than fictional consequences. Further studies may identify other universals of performance, but on the basis of currently available knowledge, it is possible to conclude that performance itself is universal. It is a fundamental mode of communication that may have a variety of cultural manifestations, but in each society, performance defines and generates folklore.

Dan Ben-Amos

See Also Ethnopoetics; Frame; Linguistic Approach; Metacommunication; Oral-Formulaic Theory; Verbal Art.

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Personal Experience Narrative

Prose narrative account of the performer's personal experience. This consciously constructed narrative not only recounts the experiences of the narrator but also follows accepted norms for traditional performance, such as form, function, or

style. The personal experience narrative also has been labeled *personal experience story* or *personal legend*.

The interest in and study of this narrative type has gained in popularity since the 1970s. Few other forms of narrative expression can provide the same depth of revelation of the social life of a community as can the personal experience narratives of its members. As a narrative form, the stories arise out of the experiences of their individual performers—and out of a felt need to relate those experiences. Performers develop their own repertoire of narratives, and individual personal experience narratives are readily identifiable by group members as to their “owners.” Like other narrative genres, their form and structure—though it is always relatively loose, especially when compared to genres such as the *Märchen*—may become more polished over time with retelling. Conversely, they arise within conversational contexts, may be communally constructed within such settings, and may be so closely tied to a given interaction that their texts almost disintegrate outside the original setting.

As a separate genre, personal experience narratives do not necessarily fit neatly within the traditional canons of folklore. By their nature as personal accounts, they may not be correlated to a stock of identifiable narratives, and these accounts are necessarily idiosyncratic. Folklorist Sandra K. D. Stahl counters, though, that these narratives do fit within the context of folklore. Personal experience narratives have long been a part of the oral tradition but as a genre have been ignored in favor of more established areas of narrative research. Stahl asserts that this general type of folklore (the new label for the type notwithstanding) has long been of interest, as evidenced by research into first-person anecdotes, tall tales, and jokes, for example.

Moreover, personal experience narratives do manifest characteristics of many of the recognized oral narrative genres. Like legends, they recount an experience of a particular person or group; they follow accepted structural and performance patterns; and they rely on a set of understandings common to the group in their transmission of meaning. Personal experience narratives, like other smaller narrative categories such as family stories or anecdotes, have a limited circulation and, in certain instances, a limited lifespan. The standardization in form of the personal experience narratives has prompted some researchers, such as Juha Pentikäinen and Linda Dégh, to suggest that it is nearly impossible to distinguish between early forms of legends and those having roots as personal experience narratives or as narrative accounts told in the first person.

As a genre for scholarly research, personal experience narratives provide an opportunity to learn about the functional norms of a group on a micro level. As performances, these narratives reflect what is important to the group in terms of performance style, narrative content, and social concerns and norms of the group. These narratives also reflect how individual performers interpret these

performative and social standards in order to present the narratives for group approval. Yet, unlike other types of narrative performance, personal experience narratives place fewer demands on the performer. Whereas many narrative types require performers who have a polished repertoire to draw upon for performance and are thus recognized for their skills, personal experience narratives can be performed by any group member. Personal experience narratives also may reveal more of the day-to-day realities of group standards than other traditional narrative forms in that they are drawn from (or at least are alleged to be drawn from) the real experiences of their performers in the present, rather than from the near or distant past life of the group or its legendary figures.

Randal S. Allison

See Also Anecdote; Family Folklore; Legend; Memorate.

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Phenomenology

One of several traditions of philosophical discourse coming out of nineteenth-century Hegelian thought. Without discountenancing the claims of idealism—witness Hegel’s own work *The Phenomenology of Mind*—phenomenology begins its investigations in phenomena, the material substances of the world, rather than in mental processes, the ethereal forms of thought. It thus shifts the footing of European metaphysical philosophy from idealism to materialism. Philosophies apart from phenomenology that are heir to this shift include existentialism, structuralism, structural linguistics, semiology, Marxism, feminism, ethnomethodology, and sociolinguistics.

The world adumbrates itself around the embodied person as its centrality. “My body,” writes the American phenomenologist Maurice Natanson, “is the unique instrument through which I experience my insertion in the world” (Natanson 1962).

This characteristic use of the phenomenological “I” acknowledges the locus of perception in the body of the perceiver. The usage does not refer to any particular individual but to an incarnated self. From that perspective, the world is not only differentiated in substance but differential in significance: Where I look from is tied up with how I see. It is the centrality of embodied experience in phenomenology that has given the term *phenomenological* its narrow interpretation in folklore and the social sciences as “subjective.”

But to distribute the distinction between subjectivity and objectivity over a contrast between the body and things, phenomenologists contend, would be a misunderstanding. Things are entangled with the body. I enter as a material object a world rendered intelligible by virtue of my presence in it. The French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty writes, “We grasp external space through our bodily situation. A ‘corporeal or postural schema’ gives us at every moment a global, practical, implicit notion of the relation between our body and things, of our hold in them. A system of possible movements, or ‘motor projects,’ radiates from us to our environment. Our body is not in space like things; it inhabits or haunts space” (Merleau-Ponty 1971).

The body is a central term in the old philosophical dispute between materialism and idealism. It partakes of the nature of both things and thoughts. To keep the mind/body problem unsolved by coming down neither on the side of materialism, which grants objects priority, nor on the side of idealism, which privileges consciousness, is one of the tricks of phenomenology. The haunting body and the incarnated mind are modes of being in a world in which subjects materialize in the flesh. Bodylore is one of the areas of inquiry in contemporary folklore that investigates the symbolic properties of the body and the corporeal properties of thought.

The world holds me bodily as consciously I hold it, “consciousness, understood as a directional force sustaining the entire range of perceptual experience,” as Natanson puts it. Consciousness is not a mental event secreted in the cranium but a constitutive act, the invention of a world. I am, Natanson continues, a “self constructing for itself the world it then finds and acts in” (Natanson 1970). The constructedness of my world becomes explicit in narrative and ritual genres that describe or fabricate a reality. This constitutive gesture is what phenomenologists call *intentionality* or the *intentionality of consciousness*. Over the course of its recent history, folklore, like other humanistic disciplines, has become more inclined to take meaning out of the artifact and reinsert it in the intentionality of its perceiver or producer.

The world I intend becomes fixed or typified so that the phenomena I retrieve from it take on the quality of objects. In this undertaking, the American phenomenologist Alfred Schutz notes, “the constituting process itself is entirely ignored, while the objectivity constituted by it is taken for granted” (Schutz 1973).

Typifications of persons become culturally visible as stereotypes; typifications of objects become visible as material culture; typifications of acts become visible as customs; typifications of talk become visible as genres; and arguably, typifications of groups become visible as ethnicities or national traits. Such typifications form what the ethnomethodologist Harold Garfinkel calls the “background expectancies” of everyday life. Part of the enterprise of folklore is to excavate such typifications from the matrix of the ordinary. As a consequence, new genres continue to appear in the field.

Typifications are among the “metaphysical constants” Schutz takes to constitute the world. Natanson writes, “The world I inhabit is from the outset an intersubjective one. The language I possess was taught to me by others; the manners I have I did not invent; whatever abilities, techniques, or talents I can claim were nourished by a social inheritance; even my dreams are rooted in a world I never created and can never completely possess” (Natanson 1971). Metaphysical constants can be said to take the folkloristic form of traditions, customs, practices, and ways of thinking, moving, and speaking that are culturally informed. Schultz calls the taken-for-granted world thus constituted the primary “realm of experience” or “paramount reality.”

A shift of attention transfers the perceiver to another realm, a different universe of discourse, an alternate reality that Schutz, following the American philosopher William James, calls a “subuniverse” or “finite province of meaning.” Thus, he writes, “all these worlds—the world of dreams, of imageries and phantasms, especially the world of art, the world of religious experience, the world of scientific contemplation, the play world of the child, and the world of the insane—are finite provinces of meaning” (Schutz 1967). Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, who have translated phenomenology for the social sciences, write:

Different objects present themselves to consciousness as constituents of different spheres of reality. I recognize the fellowmen I must deal with in the course of everyday life as pertaining to a reality quite different from the disembodied figures that appear in my dreams. . . . Put differently, I am conscious of the world as consisting of multiple realities. As I move from one reality to another, I experience the transition as a kind of shock. This shock is to be understood as caused by the shift in attentiveness that the transition entails. Waking up from a dream illustrates this shift most simply. (Berger & Luckmann 1967)

Some genres elaborate and so inscribe the realm of the ordinary as gestures; for instance, elaborate body movement and costumes expand the expressive capacity of skin, architecture reconstitutes the world as a bony carapace around

the body, or foodways inflect ingestion. All of these genres carry the imprint of the body on the world, most articulately in the form of tools or weapons, one end of which fits the body and the other the world. Speech forms, as it were, use the voice to lift thought out of the body and convey it to our social others. Thus, greetings and farewells acknowledge the boundaries of social encounters. Some genres close themselves off from the realm of the ordinary as separate realities, as when gesture is formalized as dance, sound transpires as music, or tools produce crafts. Folklorist Susan Stewart, perhaps following the title of Merleau-Ponty's book *Sense and Non-sense*, calls genres that catch ordinary phenomena and uproot them from their ordinary ground *nonsense*.

Representational genres invoke and fabricate other realms. Not only narrative genres such as myths, epics, legends, folktales, anecdotes, and jokes, but also folk painting, folk costume, folk theater, and such cross-genres as folk poetry and folksong conjure up alternate realities. Some representational genres invoke two realities at once: Fables, proverbs, puns, riddles, and folk metaphors offer their own fictive worlds and also direct attention to the realm of the ordinary. Other genres reframe reality. Genres from cosmologies to confidence tricks represent reality under a different description, a particular set of assumptions about the nature of the given, the apparent, the real. Some of these reframings of the realm of the ordinary themselves become inhabitable worlds. Rituals and religious ceremonies, feasts, festivals and carnivals, and games and play are experienced as realities, at least temporarily. Mary Hufford, for instance, reconstitutes the domain of hunting over the topography of the ordinary. Sometimes, fragments of alternate realities appear to be embedded in the realm of the ordinary as what Schutz calls "enclaves" of a different ontological status. Thus, superstitions, charms and amulets, curses, blessings, and oaths, along with such entities as gods, ghosts, angels, devils, or witches, trail through the fabric of the real, ephemera of a different domain. So Erving Goffman, heir to the phenomenological tradition in the social sciences, writes, "Realms of being are the proper objects here for study; and here the everyday is not a special domain to be placed in contrast to the others, but merely another realm" (Goffman 1974).

Katharine Young

See Also Frame.

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Philological Approach

Conceptual models and research practices applied to the analysis of folksongs, ballads, proverbs, folktales, epics, and other oral narratives from historical linguistics, literary history, and classical scholarship.

Part of so-called literary folkloristics or the European orientation, the philological approaches in folklore studies focus on the folklore text, contextualizing its semantic and linguistic texture to other, similar texts. The main focus of philological approaches lies in the comparison of folklore texts for their various textual-linguistic elements in order to: (1) classify the texts according to genres, types, variants, and motifs, (2) determine their origin, genealogy, historical development, and geographical distribution, or, more recently, (3) study on the textual level the nature of their oral composition.

Drawing analogy from the study of classical and medieval literature as well as language history, the philological research tradition provided, in the early modern Europe of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth century, the first scientific systematization of oral traditions and a model for their conceptualization as artifacts of unwritten literature.

Most philological research in folklore has been conducted within the framework of the historic-geographic method. This approach is also known as the

Finnish method, named after the country in which the method was codified. As implied by its name, the method is concerned with the historical development and geographic dissemination of folklore. It is diachronic in nature, using the comparison of folklore texts as a means to elucidate and reconstruct textual histories.

The methodological basis of the historic-geographic method lies in philological text criticism, a branch of literary research that goes back some 2,000 years to the comparisons between different Homeric texts. Since the Renaissance, this method has been much employed in the study of biblical and medieval manuscripts.

The application of text criticism to materials recorded from oral tradition, especially folktales, myths, and ballads, was popular among nineteenth-century philologists. Even earlier, the method had been employed on, for example, Finnish folk poetry, by Henrik Gabriel Porthan. Some of the best-known nineteenth-century scholars in this field were Elias Lönnrot in Finland, the brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm in Germany, Svend Grundtvig in Denmark, and Francis James Child in the United States.

In text criticism, the scholar aims at establishing a relationship between two or more manuscript versions of the same text, studying whether manuscript A is the source of manuscript B or vice versa, or whether they are both derived from a common source. Analogically, the text-critical folklorist makes comparisons between a number of versions of a given folklore item in order to determine their relationship of descent. The underlying postulate here is that the paradigmatic variation of similar traits in different versions indicates a linear process of change.

Since the manuscript is the cognitive and conceptual model for the explanation of variants in oral tradition, a folklore item in text-critical logics is a text that is a copy of another text. As is often the case with manuscripts, copies contain errors made by the copyist, and analogically, difference in folklore variants is regarded as due to errors, flaws, and other alterations made in their replication. In error analysis, the text-critical scholar uses errors as clues pointing to the relationship between different copies and establishes their chronological order. The perceived gaps and errors in one version are then eliminated with material taken from another version, by replacing, say, a flawed line with one that is considered more correct. The scientific aim is to reconstruct a text that could be considered complete and original and that would then give information about the customs and beliefs of earlier generations. To meet the other scientific requirements, a publication of such a study must contain a critical apparatus that lists the alternative folklore sources and their variant readings.

Text criticism was developed and codified into the historic-geographic folklore method by Julius and Kaarle Krohn, father and son, in the 1870s and 1880s

in Finland. Although originally designed for the study of Finnish *Kalevala* metric oral poetry, the new method became internationally known as a tool mainly to be used in folktale scholarship, primarily because Kaarle Krohn applied it first to animal tales in his influential dissertation of 1889, and his pupil Antti Aarne wrote the method's guidelines (1913) with a focus on the comparative study of folktales. With these and other publications, especially those published in the Helsinki-based series entitled Folklore Fellows Communications, they set a new course for the already well-established line of comparative-philological research into folktales, whose best-known nineteenth-century representatives had been Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm and the Indologist-linguist Theodor Benfey.

Influenced by Herderian romanticism, the Grimm brothers believed that folktales—or fairy tales, as they have also been called—are not mere products of imagination but aesthetically structured historical documents about the ways in which people in ancient (especially medieval) times thought. As anonymous products of a collective national spirit and as survivals of forgotten myths, folktales, as well as other oral poetry, are subjected to both historical-mythological research and artistic-philological reconstructions. The brothers' famous collections of tales, especially *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (Children's and household tales; 1812, 1815), became evergreens as children's literature and, as such, models for many later publications in the literary fairy tale genre. In addition to following their own artistic intuition in order to make the tales, as it were, speak the "voice of the folk," the brothers employed text-critical principles to combine different versions of the same tale and reconstruct them in their alleged "essential" and authentic form.

The comparative emphasis in European folktale study had received a dramatic impetus from the discovery of the relationship of Sanskrit to Greek, Latin, and many other major European languages. By analogy, the Indo-European linguistic connection was soon extended, as suggested by the Grimm brothers, to fables, folktales, and other oral narratives whose origins, it was thought, were to be looked for in India. While Max Müller, a student of Vedic texts and Aryan mythology, theorized on the relationship between language and myth and on the origin of religion, Theodor Benfey compared Greek fables, traditionally credited to Aesop, with Indic texts and came up with a diffusionistic theory according to which India was the source of most folktales in the world. Much of this diffusion took place, according to Benfey, as early as the Middle Ages, through the many oral and literary readaptations and translations of the *Panchatantra* collection of tales, which he himself translated into German in 1859.

As far as the migration of folklore is concerned, one of the main issues for the Krohns and other historic-geographers in the Finnish context was the politically charged question of whether the *Kalevala*-metric runes originated in western or eastern Finland—in other words, whether they had been composed under

medieval Scandinavian or Russian influence. Although migration of folklore on a general level concerns intercultural and international relations and contacts, it is, at the same time, directly related to the issue of land control and its symbolism. Indeed, the Finnish concern had many precedents in the royal collections of antiquities in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as well as in the textual collections of *naturpoesie* by Johann Gottfried von Herder and the Grimms in the early nineteenth century, which all purported to create a natural link between the land, the past, and a particular nation or social group. Thus, the significance of the new method for the international study of folktale lay, on the one hand, in the Finnish scholars' explicit interest in the continuation and consolidation of the basic folkloristic ideology and, on the other hand, in its methodological reformism as the historic-geographers questioned India as the common source of folktales and insisted that origins and migratory routes had to be established for each tale type separately, with the help of a detailed scientific analysis.

In accordance with the then popular theories of monogenesis and diffusionism, all folklore texts were regarded in historic-geographic assumptions as having an original form, an *Ur-form*, composed at a specific historical moment in a specific historical place. This then migrated from one locality to another, transforming in such a way that one version developed from another in a geographic order. As in the so-called age-area theory in anthropology, the versions recorded in the opposite ends of such a chain of development were, in terms of both their content and their locality, furthest apart from another—and as a result of this logic, they were also judged to be the oldest variants of a particular tale type. For this reason, according to Kaarle Krohn, it is possible to follow the historical and geographical chain in a reversed order and, in the same manner as in the study of sound changes in historical linguistics, to deduce the birthplace of a folklore item and reconstruct its original form.

In addition to the historic-geographic method's role in creating and consolidating disciplinary identity for the study of folklore, one of the main factors in the significance of the method was its systematic approach—or rather, what seemed to be systematic according to the contemporary standards of scholarship—to philological comparisons and folklore migrations. In contrast to earlier text-critical research, historic-geographic methodology emphasized the source-critical argument that scholars had to assemble a full collection of versions before an adequate comparative analysis could be done. In addition to extensive recordings of oral materials, this would include the sources available in print and in manuscripts. The materials would then be arranged both chronologically and by region, and the texts would be broken down into a series of episodes and other narrative components and then tabulated and compared within the whole body of versions.

Such methodology created a need not only for extensive collections of texts—and big folklore archives—but also for a uniform system of reference for the

making of comparisons between materials from different geographic and cultural areas. Already in text-critical folklore scholarship, materials were organized into types and subtypes and published with type numbers. Now it became the trademark of the historic-geographic comparative approach to compile and publish national and international indexes and registers. In addition to the canon of English and Scottish popular ballads, compiled by Francis James Child in the late nineteenth century, some of the most famous of these are *The Types of the Folktale*, first compiled by Antti Aarne in 1911 and later revised by the American folklorist Stith Thompson, and Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*.

The interest that the historic-geographic folklorists showed in origins and historical developments was a reaction to the romantic notion of a collective national ethos as the creator of folklore. The method's premises also followed the Darwinist arguments concerning cultural evolution. Although cultures were seen to be progressing, most of folklore was regarded as survivals from earlier cultural stages, subjected to a process of degeneration as more variants emerged and cultures modernized.

In accordance with the then dominant positivistic premises, the method also drew on natural sciences for models of explanation and scientific language. The interest in folklore classification and taxonomies followed a model taken from botany, and the conceptualization of the relationship between different versions as "genetic" came from biology. The tendency to view social processes in biological terms was also evident in the scholars' habit of speaking of transformations in folklore as either following rules comparable to "natural laws" or as being "mutations."

Some of the method's major theoretical ingredients were criticized and refuted early on, by both the so-called typological school of post-Krohn Finnish folklorists and scholars in many other countries. One of the early objects of criticism was the automigration theory, according to which folklore travels like rings on the surface of water or like a stream. This was regarded by the Estonian German Walter Anderson, among others, as both mechanistic and invalid, and instead, more emphasis was put on human factors in the diffusion process, including ethnic, political, national, linguistic, and religious boundaries. The distinction between active and passive tradition bearers, stressed by the Swede Carl Wilhelm von Sydow, became an important modification, as did his emphasis on *oicotypes*, or regionally adapted forms. The reconstruction of the *Ur-form* was rejected either as a methodological impossibility or on the grounds that the archetype never existed. Instead, folklorists were to strive for what could be considered the original thematic contents and construct normal forms that would, for technical purposes, serve as standardized abstractions.

None of this criticism, however, questioned the textualist tradition itself or the objectivist or natural scientific premises of philological folklore research. The

historic-geographic approach continued to be the dominant paradigm in folkloristics worldwide until new influences from anthropology, sociology, and comparative religion in the 1960s moved folklore studies away from philology and toward psychological and social scientific research problems. In the United States, as folklore became an independent university subject, philology-based, item-centered, and comparative literary folkloristics at least partially blended with anthropological folkloristics.

Despite this development, philological and postphilological approaches continue their influence to this day. In Finland, the role of text criticism in folklore methodology was promoted and further developed by Matti Kuusi as recently as in the 1970s and 1980s. In many parts of the world, even though the question of when and where a folklore item was first invented and how it migrated no longer interested folklorists, monographs on textual histories were still being written and published in the 1990s; in addition, large amounts of material are still collected for archival and comparative purposes, and typologies and indexes are compiled. For many, literature still forms the conceptual framework for oral traditions, and literary folklorists still tend to regard themselves as the only “real” folklorists.

Yet literary folkloristics is bound to change as both philology and literary research change. For example, after being the center of philological folklore study in the United States in the early decades of the twentieth century, Harvard University became the birthplace of a new type of philology as Milman Parry and later his pupil Albert Lord developed a synchronic and ethnographic approach to textual comparativism. Convinced that the Homeric epics were products of oral tradition—a theory that, in the nineteenth century, had caused Lönnrot and his followers in Finland to take up text-critical reconstructions and epic compilations—Parry and Lord set out to study textual elements that would indicate how the Homeric epics had been orally composed. Their major finding was the formulaic structure of oral epic language.

With the help of fieldwork among contemporary epic singers in Yugoslavia, Parry and Lord formulated the oral-formulaic theory, according to which epics are produced in performance by means of compositional textual elements, such as memorized traditional formulas, around which thematic units are woven. Instead of regarding a folklore text as a copy of another text, the oral-formulaic theory treats it as a product of active oral composition created in interaction between the performer and the audience.

In some oral-formulaic studies, the performance aspect has been surpassed by the theory’s philological foundation, as scholars have focused on elucidating formulas and other compositional elements through textual comparisons instead of actual performances and performer-audience interactions. For the most part, however, the theory is emphatically directed toward the study of composition in

performance, as occurs in textual-linguistically oriented performance studies, such as ethnopoetics. In fact, the oral-formulaic theory functions as both a historical and a methodological link between performance-oriented folkloristics, present-day research into oral literature in anthropology and classical studies, and the philological folkloristics proper—that is, text-critical and historic-geographic studies.

Pertti Anttonen

See Also Diachronic/Synchronic; Folktale; Historic-Geographic Method; Linguistic Approach; Literary Approach; Monogenesis/Polygenesis; Oikotype/Oicotype; Romantic Nationalism; Text; Tradition Bearer.

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Photography, Folk

Folk photography is concerned with photography—an artistic and documentary element of both material and popular culture—as it is used by ordinary people to document everyday life. The commercialization and technological democratization of photography for non-elite consumption has made photography a shared life experience and presence for most North Americans, as well as an expressive medium strongly associated with women, families, and the domestic sphere. If not from photography's arrival in 1839, certainly since the latter part of the nineteenth century with the introduction of the Kodak camera and the rise of amateur photography, photographs have chronicled the lives of common persons. As an artifact that resides in a context—a literal and figurative frame—the photograph should be considered for both its surface qualities and the more subtle information it holds about the human condition.

By treating photography customarily as a flat art, photographic scholarship has privileged surface analysis, accomplished exclusively by scrutinizing its composition and other formal characteristics of the picture plane. While this is one appropriate level of appreciation and understanding of photos, in considering folk photography it is equally necessary to adopt methods for the contextual study of photographic images, in which women would represent not merely the subject matter for, or the creators of, images, but the chief (though not exclusive) guardians of generational stories catalogued in photograph files, albums, scrapbooks, slideshows, and, most recently, household items featuring digitized images, ranging from personalized calendars to customized mouse pads.

Photographs act as visual cues for the behavior of persons connected with them; that is, they frequently encourage an intimate viewer to engage in a dialogue specifically corresponding to the imagery. Pictures may serve as a catalyst to the viewer-listener's sharing of narrative memories, or even tangentially related stories, as is common in the ritual act of presenting the contents of a family album to a guest as after-dinner entertainment. However, if not fastidiously tended, family photographs risk becoming pedestrian, devoid of emotional meaning, and become artifacts, collections of images whose specific importance resides in their function within social and historical memory.

Because photography is a relatively new phenomenon, the context of its making sometimes remains accessible, at least in part. Often, the photographer or others linked directly to the photographic event are still available to researchers.



A woman touches the wall of a highway underpass where some believe an apparition of the Virgin Mary has appeared, April 19, 2005, in Chicago, Illinois. Police were posted in the area to keep traffic flowing as hundreds of people have been drawn to the site. (Getty Images)

Interviews, oral histories, and other records of personal contact may then accompany visual scholarship. With good fieldwork, the student of photography and its lore can capture and preserve interactions between people and their contexts through material images. Daniel Wojcik's study of photographs purportedly representing apparitions of the Virgin Mary is a good example.

While photography receives explanation and embellishment from verbal expression, it is a language in itself. Every photographic image has a surface and a deep structure. The communication of a photographic message is coded, containing a subtle set of rules for the transmission and reception of visual information. People assign their own meanings to images, and yet, when viewed in large numbers, snapshots begin to resemble each other, falling into recognizable categories. Photographic images are, therefore, generalizable, signaling social and aesthetic meanings using consensually agreed upon patterns (e.g., obligatory smiles, the group shot with an identifying placard placed in front) and visual tropes (newlyweds with all the reception guests, the new baby peering from beneath a crib blanket), at once showing the unique faces of family members and the familiar poses and occasions American viewers have come to regard as emblems of a family's history.

In this sense, the study of photographs concerns itself with the history of everyday life. Once the hand-held camera had freed photographers from costly and cumbersome tripods and flash units, shooting in more remote locations and with quicker

exposure times became achievable. The revolution in technology inevitably influenced both choices of photographic subjects and their manner of representation. Prints became affordable and plentiful, and thus less formally posed. Marianne Hirsch and Jerald Maddox, among others, approach homemade photography as a folk medium, concerned more with documenting vernacular culture than with technological savvy or pretensions to art. To the extent that women have traditionally been charged with the role of culture bearer, they are similarly the keepers of most homemade photographic images. Whether generating, arranging, displaying, or exchanging photographs, women preserve the images, and with them the memories, that have become mainstays of family folklore. However, since few well-developed studies on women and folk photography are available, the field remains open to further study.

Linda S. Watts

See Also Folk Culture; Material Culture.

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Pilgrimage

The journey of individuals in homage to highly esteemed places, individuals, or artifacts with the aim of deriving some benefit therefrom. Pilgrimage operates at the juncture of the spiritual and material worlds as both a mapping of a sacred

landscape onto physical space and as the amelioration of bodily illness and injury through arduous physical exertion with a spiritual focus.

Although the term *pilgrimage* may be used in a secular sense to denote a sojourn or personal odyssey and is often invoked in discussions of tourist experiences, the word most often describes an act of piety, penitence, or thanksgiving—an ascetic journey of religious obligation to obtain healing and purification. *Pilgrimage* is also used to describe the interiorized journey of the religious mystic.

Pilgrimage, at the nexus of official and local religious systems, often generates vehement ecclesiastical responses. Though strongly rooted in popular tradition, pilgrimage is a displacement of individuals from their local communities and may be in tension with the usual hierarchies of religious organization and administration.

Pilgrimage has been described by Victor Turner and Edith Turner as a tripartite rite-of-passage experience: *the journeying to* (separation), *the experience of the destination* (liminality), and *the returning home* (reaggregation).

The pilgrim's departure may be marked by special preparations, consecrations, and celebrations. Arduous means of travel (e.g., procession) and/or bodily posture (e.g., walking on the knees) may often be prescribed (although technological advances in transportation have transformed the pilgrimage route). Pilgrims may be sick and travel with the assistance of others, or a proxy may make the pilgrimage on behalf of an ill person. The temporary exile of the pilgrim and the difficulties and dangers of the pilgrimage route are endured in exchange for the ultimate rewards of the journey.

The travel route is highly marked, often dotted with signs, sacred precincts, and facilities to provide for the traveler's corporeal and spiritual needs. The journey out is often characterized as an ascent, a time for exploration and greater freedom than subsequent phases of pilgrimage. As the destination is neared, rituals of preparation may be intensified: Special interdictions, ablutions, and prayers may commence, and special vestments may be donned. The destination of pilgrimage may be surrounded by a sacred precinct, often a set of lesser shrines that direct visitors toward their ultimate goal.

The pilgrim's destination may be a site where something extraordinary occurred, such as a miracle or an apparition, or a place where a revered individual was born, lived (or lives), or died. The material representation of such an individual might take the form of relics. A shrine may be seen as a specially energized place. The spiritual efficacy of a shrine as an auspicious place for communication between humans and deities is seen to be enhanced by the visits of successive waves of pilgrims. The visitor will typically leave some form of offering as witness to the pilgrimage: a consecrated object brought from home or a representation of self such as a snippet of hair or clothing, money, or food.

Returning home, the pilgrim brings something of the experience back, possibly in the form of a tangible souvenir, token, or relic. The returning pilgrim may experience an enhanced status in his or her community of origin.



The Kaaba is a shrine that houses the Black Stone of Mecca, the focal point for Muslim prayer and final destination for pilgrims to Mecca. (Ayazad/Shutterstock)

The force of pilgrimage is often described as centripetal: The individual travels from a peripheral location to a highly significant religious center. This convergence on a shared cosmic center is the reverse of diaspora, reuniting coreligionists from diverse ethnic, linguistic, political, and social backgrounds. The communitarian elements of pilgrimage may include simplicity in dress and diet, common endurance of a physical ordeal, and general meditation on the common faith. Yet there has been much recent debate over describing pilgrimage as *communitas*, a leveling process characterized by a spirit of fellowship, bonding, and temporary release from mundane social differences.

Some current writers suggest that, rather than dissolving social boundaries, pilgrimage actually maintains and reinforces them. Pilgrimages exist on a variety of scales and cover a range of distances. Although the collective nature of pilgrimage assures the existence of a range of interpretations and practices, the authoritarian discourse of shrine controllers and patrons may, in some instances, mediate the behavior of devotees visiting the shrine.

Pilgrimage routes map a sacred topography upon secular space and have profound historical consequences affecting artistic, commercial, and religious interchanges on both the global and local scales. Often occurring during certain

seasons and accompanied by festivals, fairs, or specialized markets, pilgrimage may be a religious tourist attraction. The relation of the sacred and secular market systems have profound effects on the local community at the pilgrimage destination.

Central pilgrimage destinations in world religion include Jerusalem (Jewish, Christian, Muslim) and Meron (Jewish). Popular Catholic destinations include Rome, Lourdes, Santiago de Compostela (Spain), and the Basilica of Guadalupe (Mexico City). *Hajj*, the pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia (including shrines at Medina and Arafat), is a religious duty to be completed, if possible, by all adult Muslims. Hindu pilgrims visit the purifying waters of the Ganges in Varanasi (Benares), India, and Mount Kailas, Tibet (China). Bodh Gaya and Sarnath in India and Saikoku, Japan, are destinations for Buddhists, and Ise, Japan, is visited by Shintos. Countless other pilgrimage traditions exist in every corner of the globe. Pilgrimage is also an important theme in literary allegories, such as *Pilgrims' Progress* (Bunyan), *Divine Comedy* (Dante), and *The Canterbury Tales* (Chaucer).

Emily Socolov

See Also Medicine, Folk; Religion, Folk.

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Place

Denotes the ways locations are made meaningful through the experiences of inhabitants; closely associated in folkloristics with notions of “regionalism” and the “sense of place,” sometimes contrasted with concepts of “space” or “landscape,” which indicate more abstract or outsider perspectives.

In the early years of American folkloristics, little attention was given to the idea that a place or region could have a relationship to the expressive culture being collected. However, by the mid-1900s, the concept of regionalism began to develop, and the work of folklorists such as Herbert Halpert, Benjamin Botkin, and Américo Paredes moved the field closer toward a coherent regionalist approach, which solidified in the 1960s with the revolution in folklife studies, the reconceptualization of folklore as process, and expanded notions of the folk (Allen 1990, 7–10). Folklorists began to look at region as a geographical boundary that constructed a shared identity for folk groups and thus a shared body of lore and to see, for example, the regionalization of folklore as a rhetorical strategy (see Jones 1976).

More recently, influenced by the work of Yi-Fu Tuan and Edward Casey, among others, the contributions of folklore as a discipline have been especially central to the study of how collaboratively produced and continually reproduced forms of (artistic) expression and communication generate a “sense of place,” the subjective and emotional attachment people have to a place (as examples of a few different types of approaches, see Glassie 1982, Pocius 1991, Hufford 1992, Feld and Basso 1996, and Dorst 1999; see Ryden 1993 for the relationship between folklore’s emergent studies of place and humanistic geography).

At the same time, folklorists have also called attention to the rather “unmarked” construction of locality (Shuman 1993) sometimes characterized by these studies and have turned to the concept of “critical regionalism” (see the work of Hufford 2002, Reid and Taylor 2002, Miller 2007, Thorne 2004) to address the relationship between local and global constructions of place and the connections between people characterized by the “global sense of place” (Massey 1994).

Another productive strand of place studies, indebted to the work of Michel de Certeau, Edward Soja, and Henri Lefebvre, envisions places as events or performances that make available the human practices and processes involved in their construction, as a way to understand that places are never “finished” or complete but are always becoming. As Cresswell articulates, “Place in this sense becomes an event rather than a secure ontological thing rooted in notions of the authentic. Place as an event is marked by openness and change rather than boundedness and permanence” (Cresswell 2004, 39). See also the special issue of *Western Folklore* (2007), “Space, Place, Emergence,” for more detailed discussions of perspectives on place.

In the realm of public folklore, exciting projects that map personal experiences and places in very local and interactive ways are being carried out online through nonprofit organizations. For example, “Place Matters,” a project of City Lore and New York’s Municipal Art Society, “seeks to promote and protect places that connect us with the past, sustain community life, and make our surroundings distinctive” (<http://www.placematters.net>). PhilaPlace, a multimedia project of the Pennsylvania Historical Society, connects stories by people of all backgrounds and historical records with places across time in different Philadelphia neighborhoods to present an interpretive picture of the rich history, culture, and architecture of neighborhoods, past and present (<http://www.philaplace.org>).

Rosina S. Miller

See Also Folk Culture; Material Culture.

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Poetry, Folk

Rhythmic and/or rhyming texts, intended for reading, chanting, recitation and/or singing, including local compositions as well as traditional verse, often highly symbolic and relevant to a community's knowledge, beliefs, and views, are considered folk poetry.

Folk poetry is an extremely diverse genre. It can include verse for or by children—nursery and skipping rhymes; materials related to particular occupations from peddlers' cries and military cadences to cowboy poetry; written short verses communicated in graffiti and autograph books; lyric, narrative, and epic song texts; traditional as well as event-specific recitations, including African American toasts; and written verses for family and community circulation. Arguably, many kinds of folk poetry—ballads, lyric folksongs, epics, and newer forms like rap—are distinctive because of the integral importance of tunes and musical accompaniment. However, folklorists have often considered together verses intended for singing, recitation, and reading, and the line between them is a particularly difficult one to draw in current societies, as it was in literate cultures of the past. The texts or the rhymical/verse structures of songs may be the bases for both serious and parodic folk poetry for singing, reciting, or reading, suggesting that the distinctions between them may be detected primarily in terms of performance. And the same tunes can be used for entirely different song texts, suggesting a less-than-unbreakable link between music and verse content.

Folk poems of various types—original and traditional, irrespective of performance mode—say a great deal about the perspectives of women and men on their society, and about sociocultural organizations of gender in general. Many religious poetic texts like the *Ramayanas* of India are recited, and probably also authored, by men. In Iran, historical battle poetry is associated with men, dirges and laments with women, and wedding verse is recited by both sexes. Seven of the fifteen “amateur poets” whose gender could be identified in Cynthia Lamson's collection of Newfoundland counterprotest verse about seal hunting are women; one used a feminine pseudonym “Minnie Ha-Ha.” However, in the additional categories of published, performer, and public-figure poets, only one

Lament

An improvised folksong or poem following a traditional pattern in metaphorical language to express sorrow and other strong feelings and states of mind. Functionally, laments can be classified into wedding laments, death laments, going-to-war laments, autobiographical laments, and recompensive laments.

Laments are nearly always chanted by women and often by professional mourners at funerals, for example. In Europe, the tradition of lamentation has been preserved at its best within the Russian Orthodox Church. Lament chants are encountered, for the most part, east of a line drawn from Greece to Finland, but in earlier periods, they were not uncommon in Western Europe as well. Laments are associated with funerals, weddings, and the departure of soldiers to military service or battlefields. Above all, they are the ritual poetry of parting and separation. Laments belong to the sacred language of a rite. They make it possible to ensure that social relations and values of a delicate nature are handled correctly and with due respect. Although laments are primarily performed in rites of passage, they can also be improvised to be used on particular occasions—for example, when friends meet or part, as thanks for hospitality, as a means to break the monotony of a long and boring job, or just to provide an outlet for a mood of depression. At its best, the performance of a lament is a channel to ecstatic anarchy, helping to penetrate deeply into the spirit of the occasion and normally accompanied by tears, with the chanting interrupted at intervals by sobbing.

Laments originated as a form of ritual poetic keening that comments on social relations. When lamenting, the chanter regularly brings into focus either the subject or the object of the lament. Laments reveal clearly the social position and interaction of participants. Lamenting is regularly practiced during wedding ceremonies and rites for the dead, thus referring to the most important transition periods in social relations. Wedding laments and death laments represent ritual poetry and are a form of sacred communication within these critical moments of transition. By means of these performances, the lamenters and the community seek to pass safely through these delicate periods of transition.

Juha Pentikäinen

woman is found, leaving a maximum of nine out of twenty-six writers who could be women.

Though some Eastern European folk poetic traditions have historically been restricted to male bards, many others are strongly associated with women. Women often perform ritual songs associated with weddings, funerals, and calendar customs—Christmas, Easter, Saints' Days, and so forth. In Brazil, the broadside *literatura de cordel* is almost exclusively masculine, since it is a professional activity requiring literacy and conflicting with women's traditional roles. But many forms traditionally associated with men, and misogynist lyrics

like those found in many forms of male rap, also offer sites wherein women can express themselves.

The gendering of folk poetry can be deceptive. It might seem that cowboy poetry, relating to a quintessentially masculine occupation, would not be written or performed by women; however, they are performers as well as audience members at cowboy poetry gatherings in Canada and the United States. In the Canadian province of Alberta, women and men write and perform poetry about pioneer life—farming and homesteading—more than about ranching. Much of what is called “cowboy” poetry in the United States may similarly refer to any and all aspects of life on the western plains.

The groups or communities to which folk poetry is directed are extremely diverse. They may be ethnic groups, rural communities, age groups, religious congregations, or special populations like prisoners, friends, families, and so on. Folk poetry is read, recited, or sung because of its expression of ideas and sentiments that the poet or presenter feels will be useful to the community or group to which it is directed. Since gender relations are pervasively significant in all cultures, folk poetry often says a great deal about women and men and their interactions with one another. Take, for example, this song text from nineteenth-century Iran:

Daughters? One is enough.
 If there are two, well, Mother is not without help.
 If there are three, the ceiling beams will break down.
 If there are four, calamity is complete.
 If there are five, it is a deep darkness.
 If there are six, send out a crier.
 If there are seven, think of husbands.
 Still, may God bless the girls;
 Still, may God's name protect the girls. (Soroudi 1990, 552)

Folk poetry may at times reflect social relations, but it may sometimes also address them adversarially, as in this Brazilian *folheto*, based on the Jorge Amado novel, *Tereza Batista*, in which the male author counters conventional views of sex workers:

The prostitute is a human being
 like any other,
 Therefore, if treated with respect
 she can tomorrow lead
 a more honorable life as wife
 and mother, no longer dimming
 the radiance of the Immaculate
 Virgin-Mother of Christ. (Slater 1982, 157)

While not the most progressive view imaginable, this perspective counters the notion that all sex workers are irredeemably damned.

Not all folk poetry by men shows women in a negative light, but such presentation is not uncommon, as in Texas prisoner Johnny Barone's poem about his life experiences:

Once in jail he came to know,
Of his wife and best friend Joe,
She told his sons that he was dead,
Married Joe and shared his bed. (Burns 1993, 45)

The poet makes his wife directly responsible for most of the evil in his life. However, as Roger Renwick noted, folk poets may extol the conventional virtues of women, too, as in verses composed to nurses as thank-yous after a hospital visit, praising their nurturance, kindness, and so on.

A Macedonian wedding text speaks eloquently about the bride's situation:

Give me your blessing, Oh darling father,
for I must leave you for a strange household,
for a strange household, and for strange people.
Though not my father, I'll call him father,
I'll call him father, he'll not say daughter.
Though not my mother, I'll call her mother,
I'll call her mother, she'll not say daughter. (Sazdov 1991, 193)

Many ritual occasions call for focus upon particular female participants. In Luri (Macedonian) wedding verse, the mother-in-law is an ambivalent figure:

O girl, get up, get up, it is better there than here.
The mother-in-law you'll have is sweeter than sugar.
O girl, get up, get up, it is better here than there.
The mother in law in store for you is worse than a viper. (Amanolahi and Thackston 1986, 108)

The previous text also reflects the structuring of much folk poetry in terms of parallels and opposites, as will be discussed following. Luri dirges also reflect gender relations between women:

A mother dies, and a daughter next to her
Spreads her black tresses over the body.

Or:

A daughter and her mother are at the riverbank
 When they do not see each other they pine for each other.
 And between the sexes:
 My grave is narrow, for no brother dug it.
 The mourning for me is cold, for no sister wailed.

Or:

Girls with fathers sit in honor;
 Girls without fathers welter in blood.

There are often touching commentaries on the importance of women:

Mother, mother, I shall never call you mother again.
 You have left me behind like a mountain ewe's lamb.

Cross-culturally, women are frequently placed in the role of mourners, often as semi-professionals extemporizing chanted dirges and/or mourning songs. Irish Gaelic lament poetry—keening—allows a mourning woman to express praise for the deceased. But a woman can also direct anger against a priest who tells her to accept her lot as a widow, against her husband for dying and leaving her, or against the abuser she is burying:

You used to give me
 The thick end of the stick,
 The hard side of the bed,
 The small bit of food,
 —That was all I expected. (Bourke 1993, 174)

Much folk poetry paints a bleak picture of women's lives. Ingrian (Finnish/Russian) wedding songs advise the groom to beat his wife, but not to injure her excessively, and indoors rather than publicly. Women ethnographers often un/discover resistance in verse-making traditions. Lila Abu-Lughod shows that Bedouin women's poetry does not indulge in the stereotypical representations of compliant, invisible Islamic women. She cites a Bedouin wedding verse that offers a negative view of polygyny:

Better death, blindness, poverty, and destitution
 than a match with a married man. (Abu-Lughod 1986, 217)

Folk poetry about heterosexual relationships is abundant cross-culturally. The Serbian “Death of Omer and Merima” is a tale of family opposition to lovers that ends, as so many of this story type do, with their deaths. In one version, the parallels so often evident in folk poetry take another form familiar cross-culturally—plants growing from the lovers’ graves that link the two:

When just a little time had passed,
From Omer springs a young green pine,
Another springs from Merima:
About young Omer’s Mera’s wreathes,
Like silky thread a nosegay binds;
About both trees, the wormwood climbs. (Zimmerman 1986, 141)

Indeed, much love poetry expresses misery:

Tears won’t bring your sweetheart
endure your malady patiently
Tears won’t bring your sweetheart
pay no mind and be quiet. (Abu-Lughod 1986, 263)

Or:

The wounds, oh beloved, of your love
heal some days then open again. . . .
My wounds were just about healed
and today oh my torment, they tore open. (Ibid., 264)

But heterosexual relationships are not always unhappy. “Maiden of Kosovo” is about lovers reunited on the battlefield because he recognizes the gold ring he gave her, and she recognizes the gold shawl she gave him.

Misogyny is rampant in folk poetry, especially that which is composed and/or presented by men. But alternative visions are also possible. Dianne Dugaw found cross-dressing ballads throughout Anglo-European and North American traditions, in which bold women become sailors, highway robbers, and soldiers. Though these songs appear to be particularly popular with women singers, men also perform them. Indeed, the almost exclusively male-performed Brazilian *literatura de cordel* includes many texts with a woman-warrior theme. But the attitudes expressed toward such women in these songs cannot be generalized; one singer and audience member might see them as personal role models, where another finds them abhorrent and unfeminine.

In a genre as diverse as folk poetry, it is difficult to locate specific common qualities. Indeed, folk poetry's symbolic and communicative aspects make it richly interpretable. For example, a series of verses that appear in as diverse a group of genres as ballad, lyric folksong, and African American blues, are these:

Who's gonna shoe your pretty little foot,
 Who's gonna glove your hand,
 Who's gonna kiss your ruby red lips,
 Who's gonna be your man?
 Papa's gonna shoe my pretty little foot,
 Mama's gonna glove my hand,
 Sister's gonna kiss my ruby red lips,
 And I don't need no man. (Greenhill 1997)

This traditional Euro–North American song text exemplifies the repetitive and paralleling structures that make folk poetry so easy to remember, but it also says much about gender assumptions and relations in Euro–North American society. Most readers/listeners would assume that the first speaking persona is male. He is probably addressing a woman who is his lover or some other relative, questioning her about her economic situation, but also about her sexual availability. The woman's response in the second verse implies familial dependence but sexual autonomy—or even lesbianism.

Folk poetry is highly adaptable to circumstances. Note the extreme semantic shift when the identities your/my are reversed (as is frequently the case in traditional versions of this text):

Who's gonna shoe my pretty little foot,
 Who's gonna glove my hand,
 Who's gonna kiss my ruby red lips,
 Who's gonna be my man?
 Papa's gonna shoe your pretty little foot,
 Mama's gonna glove your hand,
 Sister's gonna kiss your ruby red lips,
 And you don't need no man.

Now the first speaker is female, and her questions have become somewhat plaintive, while the second speaker could be male or female, the tone either dismissive or reassuring. The structures of folk poetry make it not only memorable, but also multiply interpretable.

Pauline Greenhill

See Also Ballad; Ethnopoetics; Folksong, Lyric; Performance.

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Popular Culture

Materials and activities widely disseminated in a society. Like *folklore*, the term *popular culture* is also used as the name of a scholarly discipline. Popular culture studies involves the scholarly investigation of expressive forms widely disseminated in society. These materials include but are not restricted to products of the mass media—television, film, print, and recording. Thus, popular culture studies

may focus on media genres such as situation comedies, film noir, bestselling novels, or rap music. Other, nonmediated aspects of popular culture would include such things as clothing styles, fads, holidays and celebrations, amusement parks, and both amateur and professional sports. Ideally, the study of these or any other popular materials should be done holistically, viewing them both aesthetically and also within the social and cultural contexts in which the materials are created, disseminated, interpreted, and used. In this way, the study of popular culture, like the study of folklore, involves the use of methodologies from both the humanities and the social sciences in the effort to interpret expressive cultural forms, specifically those that are widely disseminated (that is, popular) in a group as part of dynamic social intercourse.

Many definitions of folklore have tended to be enumerative, naming genres such as beliefs, customs, ballads, and proverbs as examples of folklore, thus assuming a self-evident, inherent similarity among them. Some scholars have suggested that folklore is that portion of a culture or society that is passed on orally or by imitation. In 1972, Dan Ben-Amos defined the term *folklore* as artistic communication in small groups. In this formulation, the concept of the small group replaces the “folk” determination, and the “lore” becomes identified as artistic communication. This communication need not necessarily be verbal, but it will be stylized and expressive, thus calling attention to itself. The “small groups” referred to requires that the genre be performed in company small enough in number and in close enough proximity to be able to affect the performance and to contribute to it.

Popular culture, by contrast, has often been equated with the mass media: products of film, television, recordings, and print that are widely disseminated in society or at least created with widespread dissemination in mind. Thus, when a friend tells us a joke, this is, by the preceding definition, a folk event. When we watch a comedian on television tell the same joke, we have entered the realm of popular culture. We can have only indirect influence on the products of mass media, but we can have direct effects on small-scale, interpersonal communications. American scholars often distinguish folklore, or folk culture, from popular culture along many lines, including the communicative nature of the materials themselves: Are they mediated or unmediated? That is, do we hear the story, or listen to the music, or see the dance directly? Can we join in, or are we watching a film, listening to a recording, or looking at a videotape?

Many of those who consider folklore as unmediated, small-group, face-to-face expressive culture and popular culture as large-scale, mass-mediated forms view the two as antithetical. That is, simply put, folklore thrives where the mass media have not taken hold. Conversely, by this formulation, popular culture kills folklore: Where once people entertained each other with storytelling, instead they now watch television. Many see a moral dimension here: Storytelling (or

whatever genre of folklore we are talking about) is seen as active and creative, whereas consuming mass-mediated forms is described as passive and numbing. Thus, the former is said to be superior to the latter. Other scholars might view the folk genres pejoratively, describing them as unsophisticated, primitive, or naive.

However, some scholars use the terms *folklore* and *popular culture* more or less interchangeably. Social historians, for instance, who have researched everyday life in medieval, late medieval, and early modern societies (frequently reconstructing popular rituals, festivals, and celebrations), generally prefer the term *popular culture* to *folk culture*, possibly owing to romantic or pejorative associations of the concept of folk. In these cases, culture and society are more likely to be viewed in dichotomous terms, with allowances for overlap between the courtly culture of the socially elite and the popular culture of the masses. Some popular culturalists accept this view, maintaining that only after the Industrial Revolution and its attendant urbanization and the development of a middle class does it make sense to speak of a tripartite model of culture that includes folk, popular, and elite. In this formulation, the folk represent peasant society—a semiautonomous group that depends on a nation-state for at least part of its subsistence.

The point here is not to argue for a specific definition but to indicate some of the ranges of thought that accompany the terminologies employed herein. To a large extent, definitions indicate methodologies: The definitions one works with influence both what is studied and how it is studied. In recent years, many scholars, folklorists included, have begun to look at popular culture not simply as the mass media but also as the popular use of the mass media. Janice Radway's study of a group of women who read romance novels is an example of the application of social science and ethnographic techniques to an area that had been dominated by humanities approaches. In the past, popular genre fiction such as romances would be studied as texts only and found lacking in aesthetic merit as defined by Western European high art critics. Radway (and other cultural studies scholars) expanded the area of study to transcend the written text and to include ethnographic considerations, such as who exactly was reading the novels, when, for what purposes, and what meanings and values they derived from them. In order to determine such things, the readers were interviewed to ascertain their own perspectives on and understandings of the materials. Instead of condemning a genre in which millions of people find something of value, Radway attempted to understand what aesthetic principles were at work and how readers of popular romances themselves understand the texts.

Radway's work and that of others has shown that people are not as passive as was once thought in their interactions with mass or popular forms. In addition, there are a great many areas of overlap between folk and popular culture. As



Youths wearing Halloween masks receive candies and sweets during the “Trick or Treat” tradition in Manila’s Makati city in the Philippines, on October 31, 2008. (AP/Wide World Photos)

concepts that refer to social dynamics rather than things, the two feed off each other. The examples in this regard are too numerous to attempt to quantify, but two brief illustrations will suffice. Children’s jump-rope rhymes, a folk genre, commonly use well-known celebrities, popular songs, and commercial jingles for their subject matter, and the converse is also true: Many popular songs and commercial jingles are derived from the poetry and song of the streets. Another example would be the relationship of the so-called slasher or stalker films, such as *Nightmare on Elm Street*, to the modern legends in oral circulation that tell of similar horrific killings.

Celebrations of contemporary holidays, life passages, and other special occasions are an area in which many of the various aspects of culture are coterminous. The use of yellow ribbons publicly displayed during wartime is one such example. Holidays such as Halloween are good examples of contemporary phenomena that combine customary behaviors and traditions carried out on the personal level (e.g., trick-or-treating, learning to carve a jack-o’-lantern) with the tremendous commercialization having to do with the marketing of cards, candies, and costumes; media products such as episodes of television programs with Halloween themes or specials such as *It’s the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown*; mass behavior; and even church-sponsored events and, in certain cases, condemnations.

Both folklorists and popular culture scholars study created, expressive, and artistic materials as their primary data, much as literary scholars take the novel or the sonnet as their primary data. In this way, they are both within the tradition of the humanities. However, the disciplines of folklore studies and popular culture studies differ from traditional humanities studies in that they recognize the existence of alternative systems of aesthetics that guide the creation of popular materials and the evaluation of those materials by an audience. Albert Lord, in his important work *The Singer of Tales* (1960), identified the ways singers of epics in Eastern Europe learn their art orally and how they compose as they perform. He suggested that these performances and the poems themselves be judged according to the specific goals of the artists and the audiences and according to an understanding of the problems unique to an oral poet. In other words, oral poetry is a different genre than written poetry. Each has its own aesthetic standards, and it is misguided to judge one by the standards of the other. Popular culture scholars recognize this principle and extend it to the popular arts, such as television programs, popular films, popular music, best-selling novels, genre fiction (e.g., mysteries or romances), and so on.

Each medium or genre has an audience that can and does make evaluations according to aesthetic criteria. These criteria are usually unarticulated, but they are no less real because of it. People regularly make choices as to which book to read or movie to see and just as regularly evaluate the experience: This was a good thriller, this is a great party song. Because these aesthetic criteria are generally unarticulated, it is the task of the researcher to identify them through ethnographic methods such as interviews and participant observation, as well as humanities techniques such as textual analysis. The term *ethnography* refers to the cultural description of any event or artifact, usually as expressed and perceived by those people who are participants in the event, by producers, consumers, or users of the artifact, or by members of the cultural group in question. After these insider (or native) perceptions and categories are documented, the researcher may undertake the scholarly analysis of the materials as components of a dynamic social and cultural field of behavior. These methods enable the scholar to situate the discussion of any aspect of folklore or popular culture within the larger context of the meanings and values of the society within which it exists—to determine, as Clifford Geertz has suggested, what we need to know in order to make sense of something. Social science methodologies enable the popular culture scholar to root an expressive form in its social context and to uncover the aesthetic system upon which it is judged. Humanities approaches provide models for the appreciation of aesthetic forms and enable the scholar to apply theories of genre and make comparative analytical statements. As social science and humanities methodologies are combined in the study of artistic forms of expression that are broadly based in society, scholars can begin both to

provide an understanding of the social and cultural significance of these artistic forms and to determine the aesthetic, social, commercial, and technological considerations that underlie their creation, distribution, and reception. Rather than attempting to determine ultimate worth or meaning according to an imposed value system, scholars have begun investigating the ways in which meaning is created and creativity evaluated. This requires ethnographic research, and it is in the ethnographic study of the everyday uses of mass cultural forms that folklore and popular culture merge.

Jack Santino

See Also Folk Culture; Legend, Contemporary; Legend, Urban.

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Possession

The taking over of a person by an outside spirit. The possessed person may undergo hysterical fits, show drastic changes in physiognomy, go into a catatonic state, show no reaction to pain, or speak in an altered voice that is taken for the voice of the possessing spirit. Often, the subject professes total ignorance of what has taken place during the fit, although the possessing spirit is usually aware of the existence of the subject. The transition into and out of possession is often abrupt.

Possession can occur because, in the traditional view, the human spirit has only a tenuous connection to the body, so that it may be dislodged and replaced by another spirit. This spirit may be seen as a demon, as a spirit of disease, or as a spirit of the dead, sometimes an ancestor of the possessed, that may be either

inimical or helpful. Such a spirit is not necessarily exorcised—it may be tamed and domesticated. Also, spirits of disease do not necessarily displace the spirit of the patient; they may simply dwell in part of his or her body and cause pain. I. M. Lewis argues that, where religions have become established and ritualistic, possession is generally most common among people with low status and little power, who may use possession to protest their situation safely since they are presumed to be under the control of another entity. In such religions, an amoral spirit, rather than a representative of the deity, generally takes over the victim. The latter form of possession is discouraged by the episcopal authorities, perhaps because it could alter the revelation on which the religion is based. Joan of Arc was burned at the stake largely for claiming that she was responsible only to God, who communicated with her through the voices of saints and not to the church.

In Western tradition, marks of possession have typically included the ability to speak and understand languages foreign to the patient; a knowledge of things unknowable by natural means; bodily strength exceeding the normal capacity of the possessed; and a revulsion for sacred things, such as relics, the host, and holy water. Such objects may not only prove the possession but also cure it. Typically, however, involuntary possession is ended via the exorcism of the spirit by a shaman or priest. In some cultures, the exorcism may itself be a form of possession: The shaman enters a trance and is taken over by a spirit that causes the offending spirit in the patient to depart.

In Christian history, there have been occasional cases of fraudulent possession. A sixteenth-century woman, for example, went into convulsions on hearing a bishop intoning the first line of the *Aeneid* while pretending to read from a book of exorcisms. It also was recognized, as early as the sixteenth century, that illness might account for the symptoms of possession. Epilepsy was considered a common cause, and many historical cases of possession look very much like what psychologists now call “multiple personality syndrome.”

Attempts to view possession strictly as a nervous disorder founder on the fact that possession is sometimes not peripheral, as in Christianity, but actually central to a religious movement, being viewed as a religious experience open to all participants. In Haiti, the *loa*, or god, may take up residence in any participant in a ceremony. Thus, one would have to view entire populations as quite mad in order to uphold the thesis that possession is merely mental illness. Indeed, its principle element, worldwide, seems to be an altered state of consciousness either deliberately or incidentally induced in the subject. Many of the phenomena associated with deliberate possessions (e.g., rhythmical dance and drumming, sleep deprivation, the use of psychedelic drugs) are known to bring about a state of consciousness characterized by dissociation, subjective feelings of timelessness, an alteration of body image, an increased sense of meaningfulness, and

greater suggestibility. These experiences, however, are given their particular form and meaning by the individual's culture.

Paul Barber

See Also Divination; Exorcism; Medicine, Folk; Religion, Folk; Shamanism.

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Postfolklore

Urban cultural traditions that developed over the twentieth century independently of, or parallel to, archaic and agricultural traditional folklore. The term was introduced by Russian folklorist Sergey Neklyudov in his 1995 article "After Folklore" to denote "city traditions that create their own texts and that function in oral and written forms equally actively." Neklyudov and his adherents consider twentieth-century urban oral traditions to differ from earlier archaic and village oral traditions, and to not fit the traditional canons of folklore, while still manifesting some characteristics of traditional folklore genres.

Other folklorists have suggested terms such as *urbanized folklore*, *anti-folklore*, and *folklore of the third culture* to denote the state of folk culture in recent decades. Common to all these terms is the idea that the (e.g.) folklore of the New Times differs substantially from what we know as traditional folklore genres. Postfolklore's main characteristics are its urban and marginal nature, its close connection to mass culture, and the frequent "birth" of new genres and texts. Anatoly Kargin and Sergey Neklyudov wrote that postfolklore is "ideologically marginal, polycentric and fragmented, in accordance with social, professional and even age divisions of city residents. . . . In contrast to the local phenomenon

of agricultural folklore, postfolklore is becoming national and in some forms even global” (Kargin & Neklyudov 2005).

A postfolklore text is less accessible to those outside a particular urban folk group, for example, prisoners, graffiti writers, or street gangs. For instance, symbolic language and cultural codes of graffiti can be readily understood only by members of particular urban youth groups. Because these traditions function primarily among younger, technologically adept bearers, they are more readily transmitted internationally than is traditional agricultural folklore. Such folk communities are no longer limited geographically, but rather can be global and virtual, as long as members are aware of the symbols and signs of the transmitted texts. As a result, postfolklore becomes more international (universal) than national (ethnic).

Postfolklore is regarded as arising in cities and later spreading to agricultural communities. As a cultural product, postfolklore represents a “combination of urban mass culture, created by ‘professionals for sale’ and oral traditions, created by urban performers for their own use” (Kargin & Neklyudov 2005). As a result, the main characteristics of postfolklore texts depend on their functions within urban communities. Contemporary urban communities are very different from traditional village communities and this greatly impacts the performers and transmission of contemporary folk culture. In the city, traditional plots do not function as part of an artistic communicative event as actively as they do in the village, due to differences between those communities: in the village, the territorial closeness, the similarity of lifestyle and spiritual interests, make the community much stronger as a traditionally oriented, tradition-preserving unity. In the city, members of a particular folk community are much more flexible, mobile, and influenced by many different factors. Urban folk communities are more mobile and open than are traditional, agricultural folk communities, which are formed by those who are deeply interested in traditional plots and eager to share them with neighbors, friends, or colleagues. In cities, for instance, demonological prose functions as a set of beliefs and superstitions corresponding to the traditional plots and pagan beliefs of previous generations. Communities influence the style, repertoire, and texts of performers.

The fact that the postfolklore concept arose in Russian scholarship is not coincidental. Kargin, Neklyudov, Panchenko, and other Russian folklorists characterized Russian urbanized folk culture as a substitute for traditional agricultural genres and texts, the “death” of which was hastened by urbanization in the 1970s. They wrote that the disappearance of villages and small towns caused the disappearance of an agricultural oral tradition. Alexander Panchenko, for example, argued that as urbanites became a majority of the Russian population (with villagers being “only” 26.7 percent), traditional village culture was marginalized and bound to die out. Large cities absorbed small towns and in the process

developed their own oral traditions. As traditional folk communities began to disappear, traditional archaic folklore genres were replaced with a new type of folk culture: “The twentieth century appears to be the period of the final receding of classical agricultural folklore, which is being pushed out by the folklore of other social groups, including social[ly] marginal [individuals] . . . the texts and facts of the traditional agricultural culture are becoming a part of the life of ethnographical museums. This concerns, first, epic genres (historical songs) and fairy tales. Those genres are labeled ‘nonproductive,’ or ‘incapable of creating new forms’” (Kargin & Neklyudov 2005).

The concept of postfolklore prompted active discussion among Slavic folklore theorists. Some supported it with great enthusiasm, some opposed it completely, and some argued merely against the term. V. Pozdneev, in his article “Third Culture. Folklore. Postfolklore,” wrote that “the contemporary state of folklore can be characterized as a system of circles which go from the center out: in the center we have archaic genres; farther out, new genres. The old archaic genres are narrowing because new ones are circling around.” He characterized the beginning of the twenty-first century not as “postfolklore” but rather as “postfolklore culture,” in which all traditional genres are secondary and borrowed from literature. Anikin, an adherent of the literary model of folklore, opposed both the term and concept of postfolklore completely. Panchenko agreed with the concept of the death of traditional folklore but argued that “village culture of the New Times is not much more ‘folkloric’ or ‘traditional’ than is the mass culture of the modern city. This is why the terms ‘anti-folklore’ and ‘postfolklore,’ suggested by N. Tolstoy and S. Neklyudov . . . do not make much sense.”

It is uncertain how well-received the postfolklore idea would be among folklorists of societies in which villages did not play such a persistently overwhelming role historically, or by contrast in which agricultural lifestyles still dominate. Despite twentieth-century urbanization, the mentality of the people is still fundamentally traditional, and it will take a very long time before postfolklore displaces folklore. More likely, they will continue to develop independently and in parallel.

Inna Golovakha-Hicks

See Also Postmodernism.

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Postmodernism

Various aesthetic and cultural trends that arise in the context of advanced consumer culture and that stand in contrast to modernism. The rapid spread of the term *postmodernism* in academic and increasingly in popular discourse suggests that it has all the attractions and defects of a superficial fashion but also perhaps that it is a response in language to a legitimate perception that our current historical moment has distinctive qualities for which we need a new name. This latter possibility makes a consideration of postmodernism worthwhile in general and of some relevance to folklore studies in particular.

Amid the welter of its applications, one can distinguish three broad uses of the term *postmodernism* that folklorists might want to keep in mind. The most recent and most problematic is its use as an umbrella term for all of the new theoretical and methodological strands that now crisscross the academic terrain of the human sciences. These strands, first woven firmly together in the 1970s (though many of them were spun earlier), are associated particularly with the triumvirate of French theorists Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan, and Michel Foucault. Their work forms the foundation of *poststructuralism*, so called not because these scholars reject and abandon the structuralist project but rather because they carry it to some of the logical conclusions that high structuralism did not pursue. In doing so, the poststructuralists have called into questions many of the stabilities upon which previous cultural analysis depended—stabilities of language, of empirical inquiry, and even of the human subject itself. These largely philosophical insights have had a profound effect on the intellectual practice of many disciplines, not to mention on the very nature of disciplinarity itself. Most prominently in literary studies—but for folklorists perhaps more importantly in historical and ethnographic studies—this wholesale reorientation stands at the heart of much current intellectual debate. It is worth noting that whereas structuralism significantly influenced folklore studies, poststructuralist trends have had only marginal impact on the field, though there are indications this may be

changing. Of course, the readiness of folklorists to entertain structuralist ideas reflects the fact that structuralism concerned itself early on with folkloric genres such as myth and folktale. Poststructuralism has operated largely in the rarified atmosphere of philosophical discourse.

One thing the term *postmodernism* has come to designate, then, is the whole shake-up in academic theory and practice, at the core of which are such concepts as the ultimate undecidability of meaning, the insistence on the “textual” nature of all reality, and the characterization of the human subject not as a vessel to be filled but as an unstable effect of the play of signifiers. In the least appropriate application of the term, *postmodernism* is sometimes used as an equivalent to *poststructuralism*, which refers to a much narrower theoretical phenomenon.

If *postmodernism* has most recently come to refer to the general post-1960s “turn toward theory,” its oldest application was in the arena of aesthetics. Dating back as far as the mid-1930s, the term has designated, sometimes positively, sometimes negatively, certain trends in elite culture running counter to the reigning modernism. By the mid-1960s, there began to coalesce an aesthetic stance, if not a single coherent movement, that rejected some of the more austere aspects of modernism in the arts. This new aesthetic privileged fragments rather than wholes, glossy surfaces rather than depth, vulgar ornamentation and bizarre juxtapositions rather than minimalist purity. It also actively blurred the line between elite and mass cultural forms. So-called pop art, best exemplified by the early work of Andy Warhol, was perhaps the clearest expression of what has come to be called Postmodernism in the arts, with the upper case appropriate to its usage as an art historical designation. Although all the standard artistic media—literature, film, theater, music—have generated Postmodern movements analogous to those in the plastic arts, architecture is the medium in which this aesthetic has been most fully developed, to the point that one can legitimately speak of various “traditions” within Postmodern architecture.

In this second application of the term, then, *postmodernism* designates a set of aesthetic inclinations, if not formal principles, manifest in stylistic features that stand in marked contrast to what came before and constitute, at least implicitly, a critique of modernism. Although certainly legitimate in its limited sphere, this usage names only one among many phenomena, including the developments in theory discussed earlier, that are all related as enactments of a whole sociohistorical order. It is as a name for the culture of this embracing historical moment that “the postmodern” seems most interesting for folklorists.

In this regard, a useful distinction can be made between the terms *postmodernism* and *postmodernity*, the former appropriate to specific trends in current culture such as the movements in academic theory and fashions in aesthetic style mentioned earlier, the latter a designation for the whole cultural regime of the late twentieth century. The multiple and various *postmodernisms* are to be

understood, then, as local expressions or stagings of a single and pervasive Postmodernity.

The classic statement about postmodernity as a distinct moment in sociocultural history is Frederic Jameson's 1984 essay, "The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism." Working out of a Marxist tradition, he uses *postmodern* to designate the cultural formations that are inextricably bound up with the most recent phase of the capitalist mode of production. The central institutions and mechanisms of this phase include advanced consumer social relations (the penetration of the commodity form into virtually all spheres of life), a global economic order dominated by massive corporate entities whose power transcends national politics, and a rapidly evolving technology, best characterized by the tele-electronic media, which have made instantaneous information exchange a reality.

The definitive characteristic of postmodernity, an equivalent term for which might be *advanced consumer culture*, is a new and subtly pervasive "depthlessness." Jameson traces this quality in the most fundamental categories of cultural experience: space, time, and human subjectivity. He finds spatial dislocation and intense, "schizophrenic" focus on surface images, an equally intense focus on the present moment and a proliferation of flattened, "historicist" images of past periods, and a new, blankly ironic and unlocalized emotional register to be hallmarks of postmodernity. These and related qualities coalesced as an identifiable cultural formation in the 1960s, though one might argue that the conditions necessary for such a formation were already in place in the 1950s.

Until quite recently, folklore studies had not been significantly affected by the debates over postmodernity, in part, no doubt, because postmodern theorists have focused their attention on elite and mass cultural forms and ignored vernacular expression. This separation may be coming to an end, as folklorists confront the impact of advanced consumer culture on their traditional objects of study. Theorists of postmodernity, by contrast, have been slow to recognize that folklore studies have something to offer their project.

There seem to be two general responses that are the most obvious for folklorists wishing to take *postmodernity* seriously as a name for the cultural environment of advanced consumer capitalism. One is the liberal extension of folklore studies to accommodate the postmodern; the other is a recognition that postmodernity implies a radical shift in thinking about the very status of folklore as a cultural and analytical category. If one accepts that *postmodernity* names an actual cultural phenomenon emergent by the 1950s and now firmly in place in advanced consumer society, then by the liberal principle that folklore adapts to and emerges in all cultural formations, one should be able to speak of a *postmodern folklore*. One might expect, for example, to find new folkloric genres that are made possible by these new postmodern cultural conditions. Mass-communications technologies are the most obvious arena of such emergent forms. Computer

networks that allow interactive personal exchanges have shown themselves to be particularly fertile as a new kind of folkloric space.

Another version of this liberal view is a recognition that postmodernity implies new social roles, new classes, and a new political economy that collectively allow for the reframing of traditional folklore forms in the new space of advanced consumer culture. The “folklorized festival” and the various therapeutic movements that draw on the imagery of traditional ritual and other folk practices might be considered examples of this postmodern(ized) folklore, at the heart of which is the commodification of folk images.

Standing somewhat apart from these liberal conceptions of a postmodern folklore that awaits inventory and analysis is the more radical recognition that postmodernity also might imply a condition of culture that discomfits the whole idea of an identifiably separate domain of folklore. The point here is not, as in the old mass culture argument, that folklore is disappearing under the onslaught of homogenized, highly mediated cultural productions but rather that it is increasingly difficult to distinguish the distinctly vernacular sphere one normally associates with folk culture from everything else. Jean-François Lyotard’s classic statement about the “postmodern condition” associates postmodernity most basically with the discrediting of the “grand narratives,” both cultural and scientific, that heretofore served to represent modern society’s collective experience. In their wake, we are left with the fragmentary and circumscribed expressions that are responses to more immediate and localized circumstances. In this view, culture looks increasingly like a collection of pieces—a *pastiche*, to use a favorite term of postmodernists—rather than a comprehensible whole.

Following this line of thinking, one might consider a central feature of postmodernity to be, depending on one’s political inclinations, either the thorough colonization of everyday and vernacular experience by the commodity relations of a fragmented but pervasive advanced consumer order or a thorough “vernacularization” of consumer experience in which cultural life becomes increasingly local, personalized, and immediate. In either case, the lines between cultural domains—folk, popular, mass, elite—become blurred more thoroughly than ever before. And whether one accepts these scenarios of postmodernity—indeed, whether one accepts postmodernity as a distinct cultural formation at all—it does seem that local cultures and vernacular experience are coming to occupy a new and more prominent place both in contemporary cultural life as lived and in the academic arena of cultural analysis. Folklorists have some stake in these developments since their training equips them particularly well to deal with such cultural phenomena.

John Dorst

See Also Computer-Mediated Folklore; Deconstruction; Tradition.

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Protest

Expression of objection or nonacceptance of a policy, institute, event, or situation. Protest enables an individual or group to make their feelings and opinions of an issue known publicly. Protest is often outside of the realm of political action that is accepted as legitimate.

Protest can be either an individual or a collective effort. It can be either violent or nonviolent in nature. The targets of protest are varied but often constitute a condition or entity that people are unable to escape from or too weak to negotiate with directly. Issues of social justice and ethics are often the motivation behind



Antiwar protesters gather outside the British Parliament in London in 2003 to voice their concern about the Iraq War. (iStockphoto.com)

demonstrations. Protest movements offer commentary on human existence within society and provide opportunities to voice dissent and convey reaction. Movements are diverse and many involve creative means in expressing sentiments and beliefs. Protest carries a connotation of suspicion of authority. Participants in demonstrations are often viewed as subversive and antagonistic. Interests and beliefs held in common unite individuals who rally around these shared values to organize in opposition. An act of protest can simply broadcast an opinion, or it can go as far as individuals taking direct action in an effort to fix or eliminate the problem themselves.

Protest is a common occurrence during periods of war and economic recession. The restriction of self-expression or other rights can also create an atmosphere conducive to protest movements. Such conditions cause feelings of civil unrest among the population of a society and passion or desperation may motivate them to band together and take action. Protest can develop into a major social or political upheaval if it is not addressed properly. An example of this progression is the American Revolution, which evolved from colonial protests over British taxation.

Folklore is an important form of the expressive culture of human beings that folklorists are eager to study. Organized protest movements serve as opportunities for politics and folklore to mix. Banners, buttons, flags, bumper stickers, and posters are several examples of the protest ephemera that is produced. Folklorists also focus on power relationships in societies. Clashes between those with great authority and those who are powerless are common causes and effects of protest.

Types of Protest

Protest comes in various forms including public demonstrations, written demonstrations, and other creative modes. Marches and rallies are public demonstrations that are visible and energizing. Protests at places of employment include picketing, lockdowns, strikes, and walkouts. Occupational protest has an important place in labor lore. Written demonstrations include petitions and letter-writing campaigns. Sometimes protestors circulate censored materials, known as *samizdat*, as a way of spreading a message. Numerous protests involve the use of civil disobedience as a strategy to communicate opinions and effect change. People may erect tents on government property, refuse to pay taxes, or boycott certain goods. More extreme means of protest include flag desecration, suicide, and hunger strikes. Protest also uses artistic vehicles to convey messages in a powerful way, whether through the performance of a protest song or the creation of literature, paintings, and films that focus on themes of dissent. There are protests within religious traditions, certain occupations, and social groups.

A single person may conduct a quiet protest, passively refusing to accept something he or she believes is unjust. An individual can also carry out a vocal protest by himself or herself. In most cases, however, individuals come together over common feelings of objection and unite to express their emotions.

Major Protest Movements

There have been various protest movements in the history of the United States. The labor movement that followed the industrial revolution in the early nineteenth century was significant. Through the formation of unions and demonstrations such as strikes, the people of the working class were able to protect their rights and negotiate better working conditions and higher salaries. It is important to note that this labor movement set a precedent for the widespread use of civil disobedience as a protest tactic used by large groups of people. America also witnessed the abolition movement that ended slavery and the women's suffrage movement that won women the right to vote. The animal rights movement, the right to life movement, and the fair trade movement are examples of protest movements with a narrow focus.

The largest and most influential protest movement in U.S. history was the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Americans expressed their objection to and abhorrence of the Jim Crow laws that segregated blacks from whites. Important in the American civil rights movement was the use of music as protest ephemera. The "freedom songs" used in this movement were often spiritual hymns that the people modified to use as tools of political protest.

Music and Protest

Protest movements have used music as propaganda and a means of uniting those who hold strong objections to aspects of society. Folk music serves to reaffirm people's beliefs and strengthens existing attitudes in its audience. This genre of music can be used by the disenfranchised and downtrodden to achieve political ends. Folk music was popular in the 1930s and 1940s but lost its momentum as a result of McCarthyism. A revival of the genre occurred in the 1960s.

The protest songs of the 1930s and 1940s were different from those in the 1960s. The earlier songs engendered feelings of connectedness with one another in the face of adversity and support for ideologies. The songs of the revival focused more on cultivating feelings of individualism, independent thinking, and discontent with society overall. The former were composed during a severe economic depression while the latter emerged during a period of relative affluence and growth of the middle class. The adolescents of the 1960s were filled with the spirit of nonconformity and idealism.

Protest songs include those of the civil rights movement. They are an example of both expressive culture and folk art. Protest songs are centered on the concerns and struggles of the ordinary people. Through their lyrics the artists purport to express social and political ideas.

The folk protest movement encompassed a group of individuals who believed that folksingers should act as spokesmen for the common people by expressing their feelings and opinions to the general public. Among its prominent leaders was Alan Lomax, a folklorist. Another important figure was Moses Asch, who owned Folkway Records and had committed himself to recording and preserving the expressions of minorities. Pete Seeger, a well-known folksinger, cofounded the periodical *Broadside* alongside Agnes Cunningham and Gordon Friesen, who were spouses and former members of the Almanac Singers. *Sing Out!* magazine was the key medium for the movement. Its editor, Irwin Silber, was passionate about advocating for the common people and using folk music to give them a voice. The leaders of the movement criticized the vagueness they felt permeated the folk music of the 1960s. Famous folk musicians who wrote and performed protest songs included Woody Guthrie, Bob Dylan, Phil Ochs, and Joan Baez.

Jaclyn Ozzimo

See Also Folk Culture; Folksong; Narrative.

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Proverb

A concise traditional statement expressing an apparent truth with currency among the folk. Defined more inclusively, *proverbs* are short, generally known sentences of the folk that contain wisdom, truths, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed, and memorable form and that are handed down orally from generation to generation. Numerous scholars have tried to formulate *the*



Ukiyo-e print illustration showing Rokurokubi and Mikoshi-nyudo, demons from Japanese folklore, frightening noodle shop customers to illustrate the proverb that “resistance is futile,” ca. 1863. (Library of Congress)

proverb definition, ranging from abstract mathematical formulas based on symbolic logic to Archer Taylor’s almost proverbial claim that “an incommunicable quality tells us this sentence is proverbial and that one is not.” Two major aspects of what amounts to proverbiality should be part of any proverb definition, but they cannot be ascertained from the proverb texts themselves. The elements of traditionality and currency always must be established before a particular short sentence can indeed be called a proverb. This situation is especially vexing when the question arises whether such modern formulaic statements as “Different strokes for different folks” or “Garbage in, garbage out” have reached a proverbial status.

There are, of course, some clear “markers” that help to establish that certain short utterances of wisdom or common sense are, in fact, proverbs. Such markers also assure the memorability and recognizability of the texts as traditional wisdom. In addition to their fixed (and usually oppositional) structure, their relative shortness, and their common use of metaphors, proverbs usually contain some if not all of the following poetic or stylistic features: alliteration—“Many a little makes a mickle”; parallelism—“First come, first served”; rhyme—“No pains,

Wellerism

Traditional expression that includes both a quotation and a putative speaker of that quotation. Most commonly, some contrast, incongruity, or other relationship between speaker and spoken creates humor or irony in the Wellerism, as in such well-known examples as “‘I see,’ said the blind man, as he picked up his hammer and saw” and “‘Neat but not gaudy,’ as the monkey said when he painted his tail blue.” Wellerisms may also involve punning or other word play. Although the term *Wellerism* is derived from the name of a character who used such phrases in Charles Dickens’s *Pickwick Papers* (1836–1837), the genre itself is much older, examples being found in classical writings.

Wellerisms have been considered a type of proverb and have much in common with other types. However, little attention has been given to how Wellerisms may actually function in oral contexts, and their usage may differ in some respects from that of other proverbs. They may be used solely as witticisms, as their appearance in nineteenth-century newspapers along with other humorous filler material suggests (this also suggests that some Wellerisms may have subliterate rather than oral currency). However, like other proverbs, they can be used rhetorically or to comment on life situations. If proverbs in general distance a speaker from a situation commented on (by providing a traditional observation that gives a generalized rather than a personal statement), so may Wellerisms create even greater distancing by providing a fictional speaker. Such may certainly be the case when the quotation element is itself a traditional proverb, as in “‘All’s well that ends well,’ said the monkey when the lawnmower ran over his tail.”

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no gains”; ellipsis—“Once bitten, twice shy”; personification—“Love laughs at locksmiths”; hyperbole—“It is easier for a camel to go through a needle’s eye than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God”; and paradox—“Absence makes the heart grow fonder.”

In addition to proverbs that, as complete thoughts, can stand by themselves, there are such subgenres as proverbial expressions (“To hit the nail on the head”), proverbial comparisons (“As drunk as a skunk”), proverbial exaggerations (“He is so tight, his eyelids squeak when he winks”), and twin (binary) formulas (“Safe and sound”). Such proverbial phrases (or phraseological units, as linguists call them) are but fragmentary metaphorical utterances that do not contain any complete thought or wisdom. Although they add color and expressiveness to oral and written communication, they cannot stand alone, as proverbs and Wellerisms do. The latter is yet another proverb subgenre, which is based on the triadic structure of (1) a statement (often a proverb), (2) an identification of the speaker, and (3) a phrase that puts the utterance into an unexpected situation,

resulting in a humorous, ironic, or satirical comment. Wellerisms delight in wordplay and puns, and an example such as “‘Everyone to their own taste,’ as the cow said when she rolled in the pig pen” illustrates how folk humor overcomes the seemingly sacrosanct wisdom of traditional proverbs.

Proverbs in actual use are verbal strategies for dealing with social situations. As speech acts, they must be viewed as part of the entire communicative performance. This is true not only for proverbs employed in oral speech but also for proverbs that frequently appear in literary works, the mass media, advertising, popular songs, cartoons, and comic strips. Only the analysis of the use and function of proverbs within particular contexts will determine their specific meanings. In fact, proverbs in collections without contexts and annotations are almost meaningless or “dead,” but they become quite significant and alive once they are used as a strategic statement that carries the weight and authority of traditional wisdom. Proverbs clearly include various semantic possibilities due to their different functions in varying situations. It is precisely this intangible nature of proverbs that results in their continued and effective use in all modes of human communication.

Proverbs have often been grouped according to their content, some major groups being legal proverbs, medical proverbs, and weather proverbs (of which many are mere superstitions couched in proverbial language). Other groups would be proverbs dealing with such topics as the body, health, marriage, and work. Groupings are often rather arbitrary and ignore the multisemanticity of proverbs. Based on structural and semiotic considerations, scholars have begun to group proverbs more systematically, according to linguistic and logical types. This methodology permits scholars to group together proverbs of the same structure (i.e., “Like X, like Y”) or of the same logical thought pattern (i.e., texts based on such oppositions as one:two or short:long). Although they might have completely different metaphors and realia, such proverbial signs express fundamental human thought patterns. Grigorii L’vovich Permiakov in Russia, Matti Kuusi in Finland, Peter Grzybek in Austria, and Alan Dundes in the United States have been particularly interested in fitting thousands of proverbs into a limited number of universal proverb types. This structural and semiotic research will facilitate the work of scholars interested in comparative and international paremiology (study of proverbs) and paremiography (collection of proverbs).

It is difficult to know which came first—the study or the collection of proverbs—but clearly, these two major branches of proverb scholarship are closely linked. The earliest proverb collections are found on Sumerian cuneiform tablets from the third millennium BCE. Since then, literally thousands of proverb collections of various sizes and different values have been published. Otto Moll’s international *Sprichwörterbibliographie* lists over 9,000 collections and is certainly not comprehensive. The annual bibliography of “New and Reprinted Proverb

Proverbial Phrases and Proverbial Comparisons

Stock conversational phrases that, like proverbs per se, have conventionalized forms but that, unlike proverbs, are not complete statements in themselves. Common English examples are “to kick the bucket” (meaning to die) and “to cross that bridge when we come to it” (meaning to be concerned about some problem or issue when it is actually encountered and not before). Whereas proverbs show little variation, proverbial phrases necessarily change to fit larger grammatical structures used in conjunction with the phrase (“He/She/It kicked/might kick/will kick the bucket”). Closely related proverbial comparisons are phrases that consist of conventionalized comparisons, such as “mad as a hatter” (meaning very mad, i.e., insane) and “dead as a doornail” (meaning definitively dead).

Proverbial phrases and comparisons facilitate spoken communication by providing a kind of “shorthand,” that is, by providing speakers with ready-made phrases that identify or “name” recurring situations. Proverbial comparisons always involve metaphor, and proverbial phrases almost always do so also. Thus, a speaker uses a readily understood metaphor to make a point, comparing, for example, not being concerned with crossing a bridge not yet arrived at to some real-life situation in which a problem has not yet been actually encountered. Proverbial phrases may sometimes be used like proverbs to teach a lesson or win an argument or press a course of future action, but they are more likely to be used simply to observe or comment or characterize succinctly. Proverbial comparisons in particular are used primarily to intensify meaning, by introducing into a discourse an expanded frame of reference involving some similitude.

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Collections” in *Proverbium: Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship* adds about sixty collections each year that have been published throughout the world. Among those are small popular collections that are produced with the mass and tourist markets in mind. But there are also excellent regional collections that assemble dialect proverbs and provide detailed etymological and cultural notes. Major collections also have been assembled for virtually all languages, from tribal languages in Africa to world languages such as English.

The significant collections differ widely in their lexicographical setups and their materials. Anthropologists, in particular, have collected proverbs from oral tradition, and they usually provide invaluable ethnological annotations without paying much attention to the origin or history of their texts. These collections often are thought of as indicators of cultural values and worldview, and the best among them even present the relatively small number of proverbs in their actual speech acts. This is, however, hardly possible when folklorists, lexicographers, and phraseologists try to amass the entire national corpus of proverbs from different countries. How was Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Wander, for example, to

include contextual materials with his 250,000 German proverbs in his massive, five-volume *Deutsches Sprichwörter-Lexikon*? But like other historically interested paremiographers, Wander does include references to all major German proverb collections from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century, and he also presents dialect variants and parallels from numerous foreign languages.

The U.S. paremiographer Bartlett Jere Whiting has developed a lexicographical methodology for diachronic proverb collections that is now considered as *the* model for any national language collection. In his classic collection *Proverbs, Sentences, and Proverbial Phrases from English Writings Mainly before 1500*, he has arranged the proverbs alphabetically according to their key words (usually the subject noun or a verb). Each entry starts with a lemma that lists the proverbial text in its standard form and is preceded by the first letter of the key word and a consecutive number (e.g., F194 “No fire without some smoke”). The many references that Whiting has located in various early English publications follow in chronological order, and at the end, the author adds cross-references to other scholarly proverb collections. Whiting also uses this system in his invaluable *Early American Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases*, which records the proverbial language used in American writings from the first decades of the seventeenth century to about 1820. Other scholars have followed Whiting’s lead, and a number of excellent national proverb collections based on historical principles now exist for French, Polish, and other languages.

There is yet another type of proverb collection that deserves to be considered. People in general and scholars in particular often have wondered about the similarities and differences among proverbs of different languages. Those proverbs that go back to Greek or Roman antiquity or to biblical traditions for the most part have been loan translated into many languages, and they usually exist as identical texts from one language to another (loan translation is the direct translation of a foreign proverb into the “borrower” language). The same is true for many medieval European proverbs that became current as loan translations due to social and commercial intercourse. The tradition of serious comparative and polyglot proverb collections goes back to the late Middle Ages. Today, scholars have assembled impressive collections for the Germanic, Romance, and Slavic languages, for example. A particularly valuable collection of this type is Matti Kuusi’s *Proverbia Septentrionalia: 900 Balto-Finnic Proverb Types with Russian, Baltic and German Scandinavian Parallels*. This collection represents a major step toward identifying those universal proverb types that have an international and perhaps global distribution. Proverbs such as “One hand washes the other” and “Big fish eat little fish” are examples of widely disseminated proverbs. But much work remains to be done by comparative paremiographers. A similar collection for the proverbs of the African continent is sorely needed, and there are also no polyglot collections of this value for the Oriental languages.

Although all of this paremiographical work is of great importance, it does, for the most part, ignore the social, cultural, and psycholinguistic significance of contextualized proverbs. Paremiologists and, with them, scholars from such varied disciplines as anthropology, art history, ethnology, folklore, history, linguistics, literature, philology, psychology, religion, and sociology have all looked at proverbs from their particular vantage points. Clearly, paremiologists make it their particular business to study proverbs from as broad a perspective as possible, but the interdisciplinary, international, and global involvement by other scholars is gaining momentum and has resulted in valuable advances in this field of study. Proverbs are basically used by everyone; everyone is confronted by them, and they are verbal nuggets deserving everyone's attention.

As a paremiologically interested folklorist, literary historian, and philologist, Archer Taylor clearly brought his bias to the writing of his undisputed classic work, *The Proverb*. The four major parts of this book deal with questions of origin (classical literature, the Bible, folk narratives, fables, literary works), content (customs and superstitions, history, law, weather, medicine, national stereotype), style (form, poetics, proverb types), and subgenres (proverbial phrases, proverbial comparisons, Wellerisms). The value of this compact volume lies in the fact that Taylor approaches the proverb with an international and cross-cultural perspective and that the work reviews the most important proverb scholarship prior to its publication. It is thus a broad survey of proverbs that, to this day, serves as the best introduction to the fascinating and complex world of these traditional verbal expressions. Similar volumes have been published in Finnish, French, German, Russian, Spanish, and other languages, but those usually concentrate on the paremiological and paremiographical state of research for that particular national language.

The breadth and depth of proverb scholarship is immediately evident from the 4,599 annotated bibliographical entries in Wolfgang Mieder's comprehensive, three-volume *International Proverb Scholarship: An Annotated Bibliography*. His annual supplementary bibliographies of "International Proverb Scholarship" in *Proverbium* list, on average, 200 new entries, an overwhelming indication of the interest in proverbs by scholars from multiple disciplines and countries. Although proverbs can and must be studied regionally and nationally, there is no doubt that comparative international research will lead to additional and more comprehensive insights, as it does in the study of folklore in general. Some proverbs are indigenous to a particular region or country, but there are also hundreds of generally known proverbs that cross national boundaries in their geographical distribution. Classical and biblical proverbs gained such wide currency throughout most of the world, and the process of internationalizing certain proverbs can still be observed today. In fact, twentieth-century American proverbs such as "A picture is worth a thousand words," "It takes two to tango," and "Garbage in,

garbage out” have been accepted in English or as loan translations in numerous foreign cultures through the powerful influence of the mass media.

Although anthropologists continue to study the use and function of proverbs among so-called primitive peoples (i.e., those in remote areas of the world where literacy has not yet replaced the reliance on oral communication), scholars have also become interested in the manipulative power of proverbial language in political discourse (debates, speeches, interviews, etc.). Much work remains to be done by anthropologists, especially as regards the apparent dearth of proverbs among the Native Americans, but it is of equal interest to understand how world leaders of the democratic or dictatorial persuasion, such as Winston Churchill, Adolf Hitler, Vladimir Ilich Lenin, and Franklin D. Roosevelt, have used proverbial speech as an effective political tool. The authority of tradition and the inherent claim of expressing truth and wisdom give proverbs in political argumentation a rhetorical power that can make them into manipulative and aggressive weapons. This is particularly the case when proverbs expressing national stereotypes are employed as slurs against certain ethnic or religious minorities, as was done with despicable results against the Jewish people in Nazi Germany.

Scholars studying popular culture and mass media also have begun to include the analysis of proverbs. Quite a number of investigations exist concerning the use and function of proverbs in popular songs (folk, country-and-western, rock-and-roll), in advertising (as traditional or innovative slogans), in journalism (especially as newspaper and magazine headlines), and in various illustrations (caricatures, cartoons, and comic strips). Varied proverbs also appear as so-called anti-proverbs on lavatory walls as graffiti expressing new wisdom, and they certainly have become very popular as humorous messages on greeting cards and T-shirts. The applicability and adaptability of proverbs seem to be without limit. The moment that a traditional proverb does not appear to be appropriate, its wording is consciously changed, though the underlying proverbial structure is maintained. Quite often, popular proverbs are simply reduced to their basic structures, as, for example, “Where there is X, there is Y,” and this formula can then serve for an advertising slogan by replacing the variables with the product name. There is thus a steady interplay of tradition and innovation at work here, as Wolfgang Mieder has shown in various chapters of his book *Proverbs Are Never out of Season: Popular Wisdom in the Modern Age*.

Exciting work also is being done by literary scholars, linguists, and psychologists. Formerly, literary proverb investigators were satisfied with publishing mere lists of proverbs found in the works of a particular author, but now they ask far more detailed questions regarding the function, meaning, and communicative relevance of proverbial language in poems, dramas, and novels. Impressive studies exist on such world-renowned authors as Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra,

Geoffrey Chaucer, Agatha Christie, Charles Dickens, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, François Rabelais, William Shakespeare, and Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy, but work also is being done on non-European authors such as African playwright Chinua Achebe. Linguists and psychologists join forces in psycholinguistic studies using “proverbs tests” as tools for detecting schizophrenia, measuring intelligence, and establishing employment aptitudes. The whole question of metaphor comprehension and cognition is being addressed through proverbs, as can be seen from Neal R. Norrick’s valuable study *How Proverbs Mean: Semantic Studies in English Proverbs*. Paremiology finds itself at the intersection of poetics, linguistics, and psychology, and the resulting studies are significant steps toward a better understanding of human thought processes.

Finally, mention must be made of what Grigorii L’vovich Permiakov has called the “paremiological minimum.” This concept describes those proverbs that have the highest frequency in a particular language group. Such minima have already been established through questionnaires for the Russian and German languages, and they consist of about 300 proverbs and proverbial expressions that every native speaker knows well. These findings have, of course, important ramifications for the question of cultural literacy. Clearly, these proverbs belong to the store of knowledge of a culturally literate person, and it behooves language instructors (both native and foreign) to teach them so that citizens as well as immigrants and foreign visitors can communicate effectively. Lexicographers and phraseologists also need to find better ways of including this proverbial language in various types of language dictionaries. With English being *the* world language, its paremiological minimum is indeed of major importance to anybody making use of it. With this issue, the pragmatics of paremiology attempt to find universal proverb types, and perhaps some day scholars even will speak of a global paremiological minimum, that is, a small set of proverbs that everybody knows.

Wolfgang Mieder

See Also Belief, Folk; Speech, Folk.

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Psychoanalytic Interpretations of Folklore

Technique based upon psychoanalysis, a scientific discipline begun by Sigmund Freud in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Psychoanalytic analysis proposes that (1) events in mental lives are not random, being determined by preceding events; and (2) unconscious mental processes are of great frequency and significance in normal and abnormal mental functioning. According to Freud, consciousness is only a part of mental life, developed out of the unconscious during the early life of the individual and in the evolution of the human species. The approach posits that dreams, neurotic symptoms, myth, legend, fairy tales, jokes, and daily behavior are symbolic substitutes for what we unconsciously desire. To Freudian psychoanalysts, the roots of folklore are to be found in repressed conflicts pertaining to an individual's life experiences. According to the psychoanalytic model, the existence of a universal human psychic unity allows dreams and fantasies of an individual to become incorporated into the folklore of the group.

Freud's work is steeped in anthropological interests as an attempt to show how psychoanalysis could help to explain the origins and functioning of cultural institutions. In the Freudian view, culture is to society as neurosis is to the individual. Freud's followers Ernest Jones and Erich Fromm were practicing psychoanalysts who took an interest in cultural matters. Géza Róheim, George Devereux, and Erik Erikson, trained as psychoanalysts, carried out ethnographic fieldwork. Various studies of folklore have shown that oral, artistic, religious, and gestural expressions of tradition hold clues for the understanding of social structure, socialization processes, and aspects of the mental functioning of groups.

Freud's analysis of the Oedipus myth is perhaps the best-known example of psychoanalytic involvement in folklore. This analysis, presented in *Totem and Taboo*, has influenced attitudes toward applied psychoanalysis. Its principal thesis linked totemism with exogamy and incest with taboo.

Early criticism of the psychoanalytic approach was strong, and it was subsequently dismissed as unrealistic. One of the difficulties in applying classical psychoanalytic theory to folklore is the assumption that the theory is universally applicable. More recent modifications include consideration of cultural context, including expressive culture (e.g., folklore). Folklorist Alan Dundes is among those who believe that important psychological studies of American folklore are made by psychologists and psychiatrists conducting studies among peoples within the context of their own cultures. Thus, Dundes has employed psychoanalytic theory to study folklore as well as popular culture.

According to folklorist Elliott Oring, Freud explained the suffering of one's past, how suffering was engendered, and how the past was divested. The psychoanalytic approach has contributed to the study of folklore in a number of areas. Psychoanalytic models of narrative have yielded understanding not only of performers but also of aspects of socialization and social structure. Fairy tales are recognized in the content of dreams. Myth is deemed a special form of shared fantasy that, constituting a type of adaptation to reality, serves to bring the individual into relationship with members of the culture group on the basis of common psychological needs. Myths and related phenomena are recognized as culturally shared images that serve as screening devices in the defensive and adaptive functions of the ego, reinforcing the suppression and repression of individual fantasies and personal myths. Shared daydreams, when they emerge as expressive culture, are instruments of socialization that lead to a sense of mutual identification on the basis of common needs. From psychoanalytic perspectives, folklore, art, and religion are institutionalized instruments that bolster the social adaptation ordinarily made possible by the dream.

Margaret Bruchez

See Also Freudian Psychology; Jungian Psychology; Psychological Approach.

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Psychological Approach

The systematic application of concepts derived from psychology—such as human cognition, learning, motivation, affect, behavior, unconsciousness, defense mechanisms, and image making—to the study of folklore. Although there are numerous approaches in the discipline of psychology, we may speak of three different types of psychological theories, each adopting an essentially different model of man. These three models are the *Homo volens*, which views man as a creature of striving motivated by unconscious inner urges, the *Homo mechanicus*, which views man as a machine that can be programmed to produce certain responses to specific stimuli, and the *Homo sapiens*, which views man as a rational cognitive creature capable of guiding his own behavior. These models represent psychoanalytic, behavioristic (in the connectionist mode), and cognitive (including “cognitive behaviorism”) psychologies, respectively.

Interest in psychological explanations for folklore (particularly in its striking stability) began early in the twentieth century. Psychological speculations by folklorists Antti Aarne, Walter Anderson, and Albert Wesselski and subsequent experimentation on the nature of learning folkloric materials undertaken by psychologist F. C. Bartlett and folklorists such as Anderson and Wesselski did not have much impact on folklore scholarship as a whole. Of the various types of psychological approaches, the psychoanalytic and its derivatives have dominated scholarship in folklore and related fields. This dominance continues to the present, in spite of the often stinging criticisms directed against these approaches. The first systematic challenge to the dominance of the psychoanalytic school in folklore came in 1967 with suggestions for viewing folklore as “behavior” and offering alternate explanations and research processes and methods.

The work of Sigmund Freud, C. G. Jung, Franz Boas, Otto Rank, and other psychologists and anthropologists during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries set the stage for more recent approaches to the psychological study of folklore. These pioneering figures viewed folklore and folklife as products of inner psychodynamic processes, such as unconscious imagery and repressed feelings, that function as catalysts for folkloric expressions as well as for personal and culturewide psychological dynamics. During this period, for instance, Freud and his disciples used folklore for much of their analytic work with dreams, fairy tales, jokes, and slips of the tongue. Freud observed the ambivalent reactions of modern people to “something familiar and old-established in the mind which has been estranged only by the process of repression.” For him, the distant past, hidden in the unconscious and reflected in folkloric symbols, was particularly evident in folklife and childhood and was regarded as the key to understanding present repressed feelings and urges. This general view of the ties between childhood, the past, and folklore was reflected in the thinking of early American folklorists such as Alexander Chamberlain (1865–1914), editor of the *Journal of American Folklore*, who emphasized this perspective in *The Child and Childhood in Folk-Thought*.

The psychoanalytic approach to folklore around the turn of the twentieth century borrowed the concept of “survivals” from evolutionary theory and psychoanalysis. Although existing in altered form and generally beyond conscious awareness, the traditions of the hidden past were seen to survive for the individual as dreamlike images reflecting a developmental sequence and amenable to mythic interpretation by an analyst. Likewise, folklorists saw a unified cultural past reflecting a series of human developmental stages, or “the varieties of man.” Even after this notion had waned in folklore studies, the related idea of a personal past lived on.

In the work of the Swiss psychologist C. G. Jung, for example, notions of a personal and cultural past took on a central position. Delving into folklore and the past represented a significant human activity by which individuals could derive inner symbols and imagery for use in the process of psychospiritual integration, or *individuation*. Jung’s influence on folklore studies is still being felt.

The impact of Charles Darwin can be seen in the psychological approaches of folklorists during this period as well, in frequent references to folklore’s links with the “history and psychology of man,” and the “psychic unity of man” maintaining the natural evolution of culture. At the time, psychological views of folklore conceived of psychology as developmental, addressing the discontent, alienation, and anxieties of modern industrial society.

During subsequent decades, these approaches were countervailed in anthropology and, by extension, folklore studies by behavioristic analyses involving the learned or acquired aspects of cultural and folklore expressions as responses to a

given environment. For example, in 1944, Bronislaw Malinowski, in *A Scientific Theory of Culture*, established the “functional analysis” of culture within the framework of a broadly based behavioristic approach. Concerning the scientific perspective of the fieldworker operating under a behavioral model, he wrote, “We understand the behavior of another person when we can account for his motives, his drives, his customs, that is, his total reaction to the conditions in which he finds himself.” And two decades later, Melville Herskovits stated that, in psychological terms, culture could be defined as “the learned portion of human behavior.”

Concern for the behavioral or acquired aspects of folkloric expressions involved questioning of the individual’s role in the postwar Western world. In the impersonal mass culture that arose during the 1950s and 1960s, individuals came to be known less for their backgrounds than for their social behaviors, which could involve multiple identities and roles, and the ability to “put on a front” became a valuable skill in social and cultural relations.

In this context, a greater degree of authenticity seemed to exist in subcultures and traditional folk behavior, which were seen to possess a level of intimacy and value that was missing in mass society. Thus, behavior became an increasingly important object of study for folklorists during the 1960s, a period that witnessed rapid social action and change. Many researchers made forays into the area of day-to-day behavior that was not bound by class considerations. In folklore studies, research methods moved toward the objectivity of behaviorism and away from theory. In such work, researchers drew conclusions from behavioral observation and analysis, which they hoped would lead to a greater understanding of the psychology of folkloric expressions.

Seeking to shift the emphasis in folklore theory from the product to the process, Hasan El-Shamy called on folklorists to “initially concern themselves with folkloric responses (narrating, believing, singing, applying a proverb, or dancing) and relevant social and cultural factors before proceeding to the study of the folklore items themselves (narratives, beliefs, songs, proverbs, or dances).” To achieve the goal, he introduced the concept of “folkloric behavior,” noting direct links between behavioristic learning principles such as motivation, context (cues), rewards, and punishments on the performance of established folk traditions (e.g., customs, lifestyle, and verbal lore such as lyric songs, ballads, and proverbs) of an ethnic community in the United States (Egyptian immigrants in Brooklyn, New York). By applying these learning principles, the study established observable and quantifiable relationships between the stability and subsequent continuity of certain folklore items or their disintegration and ensuing disappearance. The learning and retention of folkloric expressions also are affected by factors such as repetition, recency, structure, and ego involvement (or self-reference); this latter factor calls into play individuals’ attitudes toward themselves and their possessions, social groups, values, and institutions.

El-Shamy's analysis of Egyptian storytellers revealed that certain folkloric items are ego-involving for particular individuals who view them as their own property and thus are more likely to be learned and remembered. Similarly, entire social, religious, vocational, and ethnic groups or even entire communities or nations may be ego-involved with particular folk items, which they see as reflecting their own identity. The genres or subclasses of responses that are subject to such communal ego involvement include beliefs, myths, legends, memorates, and proverbs. Moreover, El-Shamy showed that the learning and memorization of folktales is a function of the behavioral "law of effect," in which rewards have a "stamping in" effect on an individual's memory and punishments have an opposite, "stamping-out" effect. Similarly, the "law of exercise" operates in folkloric behavior in that learning and retention of folklore items are functions of repetition and recency as well as of the meaning inherent in the structural qualities of the learned material. These latter principles are, in turn, functions of ego involvement, in which folkloric materials offer greater behavioral rewards and thus are more meaningful to the individual.

In another cognitive behavioristic study, El-Shamy applied concepts such as stimulus and response (S-R) theory in discussing the analysis of folk texts. He argued that in using the S-R approach in folklore studies, two aspects of a folkloric response need to be differentiated: (1) the initial response per se such as narrating, singing, dancing, or performing (i.e., the initial action), and (2) the style, "texture," form, and content of that response, which involves examination of the folklore item itself as a whole, or what may be called its *measurement*. In terms of the folktale, this notion may be stated as follows: what makes (stimulus and cues) a person (organism) tell (response) a tale (the measurement of the response), under which conditions (cues), and with what results (effect). This approach holds true for other forms of lore as well, such as folk art and dance.

Around the same time, El-Shamy combined cognitive behaviorism with the psychology of perception and cognitive systems in a study of "the brother-sister syndrome" as embodied in the folktales of traditional Middle Eastern groups. In this work, narratives related to brother-sister interactions and their related cognitive and affective states were shown to reveal a pattern of brother-sister love and affection, husband-wife hostility, sister-brother's wife rivalry, and niece/nephew-maternal uncle affection. El-Shamy used concepts from behavioral and cognitive psychology to show how the narrative components of tale telling in Arab folk groups—that is, the gender and age of the narrator and audience, the direction and routes for communicating a story, the narrative's structure and content, the semantics involved in expressing its various aspects, and the symbols contained in it—all relate to the tale's affective content, as well as to the expression of sentiments within the traditional Arab family.

Taken separately, each of these factors by itself may not have sufficient power to determine the motivating force for telling a tale, but together, they reflect the

general nature of that force. In other words, the folk narrative is viewed as a response to specific stimuli or an integrated behavioral event in which motivation (stimuli, wants, or goals) and intermediary stimuli (cues, or the context in which narration occurs), as perceived by the narrator, invoke the tale. Thus, the folktale as a whole may be seen as the measurement of that response and an instrument for accomplishing the narrator's goals. Moreover, both the affective and cognitive elements of the narrative are seen to parallel other cognitive systems, schemata, or worldviews typical of the narrator and his or her cultural group.

The motivating force that determines the sequencing of events in traditional Arab tales reflecting the brother-sister syndrome is that the brother and sister desire to be together. The narrator perceives this force and behaves within its framework. With the fulfillment of the brother's and sister's wishes at the end of the tale, the underlying motivation diminishes in power, and the story reaches a conclusion that is emotionally satisfying to both narrator and listeners.

El-Shamy supported his views on the brother-sister syndrome in Arab folktales through numerous examples from the Middle East and North Africa, all of which reflect the international folktale type AT 872: "Brother and Sister." His study aimed to establish the extent to which this tale type is "an integrated cognitive system," in which the various parts of the tale are interconnected and congruent with each other and the tale operates as functional social behavior that helps to realize the narrator's goals. Thus, El-Shamy combined concepts from cognitive psychology (e.g., "integrated cognitive system") and behaviorism (e.g., the narrator's goals) to show that AT 872 represents an interpersonal behavioral event and is "an integrated instrumental (goal-oriented) social act."

In recent decades, directly cognitive approaches to folk expressions and symbols have emerged in folklore studies as well. Henry Glassie, for example, examined the trend toward symmetry and enclosure in folk housing in colonial Virginia as a cognitive-affective need for order in the midst of perceived chaos during the American Revolution. Similarly, Michael Owen Jones has analyzed the transformations in the cognitive schemata of a folk artisan, a maker of hand-made furniture. Jones noted that when this craftsperson worked near crowded urban areas, his cognitive schemata and work reflected a sense of enclosure. But when "drawn back into the countryside, his chairs opened up," which Jones interpreted as a change in cognitive-affective states.

Another area of inquiry derived from cognitive psychology that has been addressed recently in folklore scholarship is memory storage and retrieval, specifically, memory for stories. Robert A. Georges examined the complementarity and conflict between folklorists' and psychologists' views on memory, challenging the long-standing notion that individual folklore items are simply stored in "inventorylike fashion" for subsequent retrieval on command. In contrast to this

view, Georges stated that many folklorists and psychologists are adopting a more dynamic, generative, context-specific model of memory, supported by data from neuroscience. And yet others favor neither the static storage-and-retrieval model nor the dynamic and generative view. Instead, these researchers posit that memory may be both stable and variable, depending on the situation. Implicit in such a view are the assumptions that what is most readily remembered in a given item of folklore is its “basic plot or central theme, while what is likely to be forgotten and perhaps replaced are specifics and details.” This approach is widespread in folklore studies, with those parts of stories or songs that are best remembered being identified variously as “normalforms,” “kernel stories,” “emotional cores,” or “ideational cores.” Georges pointed out that, whatever the model or approach a folklorist adopts, memory is a central concept in folklore studies and deserves to be examined and discussed more vigorously in future research and theory in the field. He stated that folklorists have the experience and skills needed to test hypotheses and assess generalizations made by nonfolklorists, as well as the responsibility to reveal to nonfolklorists theories about memory that have guided and emerged from their own inquiries.

Other psychological concepts that have influenced folklore studies in recent years have come from the area of social psychology. For instance, the concept of “conduit” proposed by Linda Dégh and Andrew Vázsonyi, in their influential “The Hypothesis of Multi-Conduit Transmission in Folklore,” is essentially the social psychological technique of “sociogram.” Robert A. Georges discussed “communicative role and social identity in storytelling,” noting that since the 1970s, folk narratives have begun to be studied as social behaviors, such as “communication,” “interaction,” “performance,” and “art.” And folktales have been seen as “situated in” and “emergent from” cultural or social contexts, with narrators being described as “performers,” “artists,” and “followers or transformers of rules.” Georges saw such trends as a move toward a new model of folklore studies emphasizing the social behavior of participants in storytelling, as opposed to the older text-transmitting-and-receiving model. He felt that the conceptualizing and identifying of tale narration or storytelling as a panhuman, role-based communication mode, with participants’ behaviors being determined by manifestations of their communicative roles and identities, “provide part of the intellectual foundation for an alternative model for folk narrative research.” Such a psychologically based approach counters the culture-based construct that has dominated folklore studies for many decades, which assumes that folk narrators and other performers identify themselves exclusively in cultural terms.

The emotional aspects of folk narrative also have been discussed in the psychological approaches of numerous folklorists, who have used ideas and principles derived mainly from psychoanalysis and neopsychoanalytic schools. Such efforts generally have focused on the panhuman, hereditary, or archetypal bases for the

origin and continuity of “emotional” patterns in folktales. Other work has employed vaguely defined concepts, such as feelings, attitudes, love, hate, and affect.

However, two general aspects of the emotional experience are of special importance in folklore research and may be defined and used precisely: *emotions* and *sentiments*. These terms have been used in the folklore literature interchangeably, but recent psychological research differentiates them from each other. Emotions may be defined as complex arousals that stem from an organism’s attempts to cope with a given environment. They emerge through disturbance or sudden success in activities basic to biological survival and well-being, being acute, intense, and often disruptive in nature. By contrast, sentiments are affective experiences with a cognitive basis, such as patriotic, religious, ethical, aesthetic, or intellectual ideas, and they are based on past life experiences and education. They are usually enduring and should be distinguished from transient cognitive experiences, such as the memorization of facts for academic purposes. Given these definitions, behavior in folk narratives that depicts sudden, intense, disruptive affective experiences largely connected with basic biological needs may be seen as describing emotions. Examples of this group include AT 1119 (“The Ogre Kills His Own Children”) and AT 931 (“Oedipus”). Another application of the psychological approach to folklore is the recent adoption of key principles from cognitive psychological literature as classificatory devices, especially as motifs recurrent in “folk literature” and other facets of traditional community life. The assumption here is that if a psychological theory is “correct,” with reproducible results, it must be applicable to instances of actual living experiences as portrayed in the cultural sphere that emphasizes the stable reproducibility of traditions (i.e., folklore). Although Stith Thompson had expressed some doubts in this regard (probably with reference to the psychoanalytic approach), there are indications that such psychological (and sociological) concepts do recur in folk expressions as a matter of empirical observation by folk groups and that they can be of significant classificatory (indexing) usefulness. Examples of these newly devised motifs are the following:

- A1241.5.1§, “Physical and personality attributes (temperament) are determined by characteristics of the earth from which the first man was created”
- J10.1§, “Persistence of first (primary) impressions”
- J10.1.1§, “Unforgettable first experience”
- J19§, “Knowledge acquired from experiencing the suffering of others”
- J20§, “Conditioning: effects associated with past experience cause man (animal) to respond accordingly (conditioned response)”
- J20.1§, “Memory of painful experience causes animal to flee (feel pain)”
- J148§, “Teaching (learning) through repetition”

- P798§, “Characteristics of social interaction within triads”
- P798.1 §, “Unbalanced (unstable) triads”
- P798.1.0.1 §, “Triads revolving around father and mother as unbalanced (Oedipus)”
- P798.1.0.5§, “Triads revolving around brother and sister as unbalanced (Sethian syndrome)”
- P798.1.1 §, “Conflict within a triad: one party is removed so as to restore stability (balance)”
- P750.0.1 §, “Basis for social differentiation and stratification”

The application of these psychologically oriented motifs (and related tale types) to bodies of cross-cultural primary data should help bridge the gap between the data used in theory building in folklore scholarship, on the one hand, and the contents of lore itself, on the other.

Besides the realm of research and theory in psychology, the applied areas of the field also have had an impact on folklore studies over the decades. For instance, Freudian psychoanalysis and Jungian analytic practice, as noted earlier, have had a noticeable influence on folklorists.

Also, the general topic of mental health and illness in traditional cultures has been examined by numerous researchers and theorists. Preventive and therapeutic folk practices, including the beliefs, values, and techniques of shamans and faith healers as well as the contrast between ideas and methods used in scientific psychiatry and folk treatments in traditional settings and the successes and failures of folk healing all have been addressed.

Another area of applied psychological theory is the use of folklore in curriculum development in elementary and high school education. It is hoped that the ego-involving aspects of lore will induce students to learn more and faster.

Clearly, folklorists need not seek explanation in a single type of psychological theory adopting only one of the three models of humans cited earlier and excluding the other two. As psychology has matured as an intellectual discipline, there is recognition that humans are a synthesis of all three models: *Homo volens*, *Homo mechanicus*, and *Homo sapiens*.

Hasan El-Shamy

See Also Freudian Psychology; Jungian Psychology; Psychoanalytic Interpretations of Folklore; Worldview.

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Public Sector Folklore

The presentation and interpretation of folklore outside its original context. The term *public sector folklore*, in use since approximately 1980, can be taken in either a narrow or a broad sense, according to Archie Green. The narrow sense emphasizes certain types of activities carried out by folklorists to present folklore to “the public,” together with the host institutions that house and support such activities. In this sense, public sector folklore includes distinctive research and presentation activities (including the production of festivals or live performances, media programming, exhibitions, publications, and other educational programs) that have flourished in large part since the early 1970s but that have important earlier roots; these activities are carried on by folklorists working primarily outside academic life, in arts councils, museums, historical societies, and other public or quasi-public institutions.

Robert Baron and Nicholas Spitzer’s *Public Folklore* gives a concise statement of a broader view of the term: “Public folklore is the representation and application of folk traditions in new contours and contexts within and beyond the communities in which they originated, often through the collaborative efforts of tradition bearers and folklorists or other cultural specialists.”

In this instance (though these authors use a slightly different term), public sector folklore includes *all* activities, since the beginning of the discipline over a century ago, that have represented or applied folk traditions in some new way or to some new audience. In this light, any or all of the following contemporary phenomena can be understood as public sector folklore:

- an audio-illustrated class lecture on polka music
- a demonstration of a Cajun-style *boucherie* (traditional hog butchering) by south Louisianans to a busload of northern tourists
- a book-length study published by a university press about folk traditions in women's domestic work
- a collaboration among traditional sweet grass basket makers, folklorists, and natural resource specialists to ensure that those artists' access to necessary materials, threatened by urban development, is ensured
- a community-sponsored project to find and document the work of local quilters and other needle artists for exhibition at the local library or historical society

Though the following comments concentrate on public sector folklore work in the United States, it is important to remember that there is a long history of such work abroad, often stressing what European scholars call *folklife*: the material and customary culture of (increasingly marginal) rural groups. Since the early years of this century, European governments in particular have supported intensive, systematic folklore research and the maintenance of national archives of documentary materials drawn from that research. What is more, they also have developed living folk museums representing historical periods in material and cultural life through reconstruction and reenactment. And, especially during the Iron Curtain era in the former Eastern bloc nations, they have trained and toured performing ensembles, presenting nationalized amalgams of regional music and dance styles as governmentally sanctioned evidence of a proud peasant past undergirding the socialist present and future.

In the United States perhaps even more than abroad, the history of public sector folklore is coextensive with the history of the entire field of folklore. For its first fifty years, the field was broadly public in its orientation, though the term *public sector folklore* was not used to describe any folklore work until around 1980. During its earliest years of development (circa 1880 to 1900), the discipline of folklore in the United States was shaped as much by folklorists working in public institutions (e.g., the Smithsonian Institution, the Bureau of American Ethnology, and the American Museum of Natural History) and by talented,

thorough, and articulate amateurs as it was by university faculty or by private scholars. During the depression years, several branches of the Works Progress Administration's arts projects—most notably, the Federal Writers' Project, the folklore activities of which were coordinated by Benjamin Botkin in the late 1930s—devoted attention to collecting and disseminating American folk expression.

However, between the late 1940s and the late 1960s, public sector folklore generally fell out of favor within the larger field. During these years, many university scholars involved in focused, dedicated efforts to establish folklore as a significant university discipline argued that public sector folklore's "popularization" of folk expression weakened not only the material of folklore but also the discipline's own chances for academic respectability—and the departmental territory, research grants, and other professional benefits that respectability could bring. In effect, the increasing power of the field of folklore as an academic discipline was purchased at the cost of the wholeness of that part of the discipline and of its connection with a broader public. At the same time, however, the products of the "popularizers" of folklore—including Botkin's various *Treasures* volumes, Sarah Gertrude Knott's annual National Folk Festivals (which began in 1934 and continue in changed form today), and local folk dance participation activities throughout the country—were indeed popular, then and now. To this day, Americans' ideas about folklore have been shaped and reinforced far more by such popular work than by the academic activities of folklorists.

A movement toward *applied folklore*, the use of folklorists' skills and knowledge for projects of social reform in the communities they study, took place within the American Folklore Society in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Based in leftist movements of the 1960s joining intellectual and political life, such work went beyond the presentational activities of public sector folklore. But once again, voices idealizing "detached, objective" scholarship held sway, and the applied folklore movement effectively ceased to be, not to be resurrected until the "cultural conservation" movements of the middle 1980s.

Even viewed in the context of this long history, the 1970s saw an unprecedented explosion of work in the public sector, most of it funded by federal and state governments. In 1967, the Smithsonian Institution began presenting an annual Festival of American Folklife, directed by Ralph Rinzler, on the National Mall—the nation's ceremonial axis—in Washington, DC. Initially a weekend's performance of traditional music, it soon grew into a two-week exploration of various forms of folk performing, material, narrative, and customary traditions from throughout the United States and the world. In the nation's bicentennial year of 1976, in fact, the festival ran for twelve weeks and featured the folk traditions of scores of cultural groups from all the states and territories and dozens of other countries. Moreover and equally important for the history of public sector



Colombian women's singing group at a Las Americas venue at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival on the Mall in Washington D.C., July 2, 2009. (Richard Gunion/Dreamstime.com)

folklore, the festival (particularly the enormous 1976 undertaking) has served as the annual training ground for young public sector folklorists.

Their mid-1970s Smithsonian experience enabled these young folklorists to occupy the dozens of “state folklorist” posts and other more local public sector folklore positions that were created between 1975 and 1990. Most of these positions are located in state arts councils (and a minority in state humanities councils, historical societies, departments of culture, or other similar agencies), and, like state arts councils themselves, they were a direct result of the initiative of the Folk Arts Program (now renamed the Folk and Traditional Arts Program) of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

The Folk and Traditional Arts Program began in 1974 and, over the next several years, grew from within the NEA’s special projects office to take on independent status. It was headed until 1976 by Alan Jabbour, folk music scholar and former head of the Library of Congress’s folk music archive, and from 1977 to 1992 by Bess Lomax Hawes, who joined the NEA following an extensive career in folklore as a collector, performer, teacher, and writer. Longtime deputy Dan Sheehy took over direction of the program after Hawes’s departure.

Early in the program's history, the staff set several objectives, including that of firmly establishing folklore in the landscape of public support for culture and the arts. In part, they went about achieving that objective by offering grants to state arts councils to establish folk arts programs, staffed by professional folklorists, to serve artists and art forms not served by state councils' more typical music and visual arts programs. In this way, the Folk and Traditional Arts Program has attempted to do in the world of government what academic folklorists had attempted to do in the world of universities: establish institutional territory but, in this case, without needing to disparage other aspects of folklore work.

For reasons ranging from a belief in the necessity of support for folk expression to a desire for federal funds, many state arts councils and other agencies took advantage of this NEA support. Among the first states to begin folk arts programs were Alabama, Florida, Maryland, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Tennessee, and Utah. These programs' early activities—more often than not, statewide folk festivals or folk arts exhibitions, both based on field research and documentation—were intentionally chosen to establish visibility and territory for folk arts, folk artists, and folklorists. Since both were considered comparable in impact, the choice between them, in fact, was often determined by the interests of the new state folklorist or by the preferences of state arts council directors or boards.

Each of these presentational modes has its advantages and disadvantages. Folk festivals tend to be large and therefore highly visible, and as celebratory media, they are associated in the public mind with fairs, outdoor concerts, and other visually and programmatically similar events. To be sure, exposure and celebration are powerful cultural tools, especially when festival artists and audiences come from different cultural backgrounds. Nevertheless, festival producers' educational aims are often frustrated by audience perceptions of these events as primarily for entertainment—again, as are state fairs and other celebratory events. Festivals' presentational settings and techniques have concentrated on (and the wandering behavior of festival audiences favors) performing artists as opposed to craftspeople and large-scale events as opposed to intimate ones. Finally, festivals tend to be quite expensive and can be short-lived and ephemeral unless plans are made to build more lasting community programs on the foundation of festival celebrations or to extend the life spans of festivals by tours, residencies, and other movable or smaller-scale presentational activities.

Exhibitions, by contrast, favor the presentation of material culture. They can be broader and more flexible in approach, devoting attention to dimensions of medium, theme, cultural and social context and the development of a tradition over time that are often difficult to convey effectively in live events. Exhibitions can travel to several sites and thus reach more diverse and larger audiences, and exhibition catalogs, when carefully prepared, become valuable, permanent educational products. Without creative conception and design, however, exhibitions

can become only static inventories of objects that do not convey the vitality and depth of their home traditions and communities.

Since the mid-1970s, state folk arts programs have built on this heritage to design and produce their own locally appropriate repertoire of activities. These include conducting and documenting field research; providing advice and assistance to folk artists; producing festivals, exhibitions, media programs, publications, educational residencies, and other public presentations; and giving grants to artists and community-based organizations. Committees of public sector folklorists conducted surveys of these state programs' funding and activities in 1983, 1984, 1989, and 1994 for the Folk and Traditional Arts Program and the Public Programs Section of the American Folklore Society (the society's interest group for public sector folklorists).

At present, forty-eight of the fifty-six states and territories have such programs. Their increasing establishment and maturity—and funding—also has supported the growth, especially since the mid-1980s, of a significant number of public folk cultural programs in cities and counties that concentrate on local artists and traditions. Finally, several of the regional consortia of state arts councils, which foster cooperative activities among the states (the Mid-Atlantic Arts Federation, the New England Foundation for the Arts, the Southern Arts Federation, and the Western States Arts Foundation), now include folk arts among their presentations and folklorists on their staffs.

Since the mid-1970s, the NEA Folk and Traditional Arts Program has shaped the public sector folklore landscape in other ways. The program gives grants throughout the country to community-based nonprofit organizations for the presentation and media documentation of traditional arts and artists, as well as for various services to the field. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the program supported regular meetings of state folklorists in Washington, DC, and more recently has convened meetings and designed projects on support for crafts and craftspeople, on folk arts in education, and other special topics. The program pioneered the awarding of small grants to support apprenticeships in the folk arts, and it has passed on to many states the responsibility and the funding to continue such programs. In 1982, the program began honoring the nation's finest and most respected practitioners of tradition through an annual set of a dozen or more National Heritage Fellowships, thereby also giving larger visibility to folk tradition and the field of folklore.

During this same period, other federal programs were created or expanded. An intensive lobbying effort, spearheaded by Archie Green, for a federal institution specifically devoted to folklore led to the passage of the American Folklife Preservation Act in 1976, which established an American Folklife Center to be housed in the Library of Congress to "preserve and present American folklife," in the language of the act. In 1978, the center incorporated the Library's Archive

of Folk Culture, created in 1928 as the Archive of Folksong and directed, over the years, by several of the most significant “popularizers” of American folk culture: John Lomax, Alan Lomax, Benjamin Botkin, and Duncan Emrich. The center, directed by Alan Jabbour since its establishment, carries out its own program of team field research projects, archival organization and preservation, reference services, conferences, educational programs and publications, and services to the field.

Since the publication in 1983 of its study *Cultural Conservation: The Protection of Cultural Heritage in the United States*, the center also has devoted effort to working out the implications of the concept of “cultural conservation.” This concept is both an end—the expression of an ideal, in thinking and planning, of concern for the processes and products of everyday culture—and a means—a way of saying “folklore” to professionals and policy makers in other fields in a manner they are more likely to understand.

The National Endowment for the Humanities, since it is not internally organized according to humanities disciplines, has no folklore program or staff positions per se. However, NEH has had folklorists on its staff for some years who serve as important advisers to and conduits from the field.

The Festival of American Folklife, originally produced by the Smithsonian’s Division of Performing Arts, became a production of the newly created Office of Folklife Programs in 1976. In 1987, the office acquired the enormous recorded holdings of Moses Asch’s Folkways Records after Asch’s death. It now both distributes existing Folkways recordings and vigorously issues new recordings under its Smithsonian Folkways label.

In line with the recent development of interdisciplinary university programs and scholarly journals in “cultural studies,” the office was renamed the Center for Folklife Programs and Cultural Studies in 1992. In addition to the annual festival and ongoing recording activities, the center produces documentary publications and films and works closely with the cultural groups featured in the festival to plan continuing folk cultural programs in their home communities. Among its other activities is an annual workshop, coinciding with the festival, to bring folklorists together with “community scholars” (those many skilled and devoted non-professionals with a long history of commitment to documenting, presenting, and supporting local folk traditions) to exchange the useful philosophies and practices developed by both groups.

This same twenty-year period has seen the development of energetic private, nonprofit organizations engaged in local, state, or national folklore research and programming. The oldest of these—actually founded well before this period—is the National Council for the Traditional Arts (NCTA) in Silver Spring, Maryland. Founded by Sarah Gertrude Knott in 1934 as the National Folk Festival Association to produce the event of the same name, the organization was

essentially devoted only to that project until recently. Since beginning in the early 1970s, NCTA (under the direction of Joe Wilson) has designed and tested many new models for the presentation of (mostly performing) folk arts. Most notable among these is the “inreach” tour, which presents respected local performers to other communities around the country or world that share the performers’ culture (as opposed to “outreach” tours, much more common in the mainstream arts world, that present performances to culturally unfamiliar audiences).

Several private, nonprofit organizations, headed by former state folklorists, carry on work once done by public sector programs in their state’s government, as well as newer, unique programs. These include the Alabama Center for Traditional Culture, Texas Folklife Resources, the Vermont Folklife Center, and the Western Folklife Center in Elko, Nevada. Similar organizations focused at the community level include City Lore and the Ethnic Folk Arts Center in New York City, Cityfolk in Dayton, and the Philadelphia Folklore Project. In addition, many other arts, cultural, and educational institutions support their own public sector folklore and folk arts programs, from the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco to the Institute of Texan Cultures in San Antonio and the McKissick Museum at the University of South Carolina in Columbia. Finally, several folk museums and historical archaeology sites—among them the Conner Prairie Pioneer Settlement outside Indianapolis, the Jensen Living Historical Farm in Logan, Utah, the Museum of American Frontier Culture in Staunton, Virginia, and Plimoth Plantation in Plymouth, Massachusetts—carry on in the European tradition by presenting reconstructions and reenactments of rural folklife.

This network of public sector folklorists and institutions keeps written track of itself through the twice-yearly issues of the *Public Programs Newsletter*, the periodical of the American Folklore Society’s Public Programs Section. A typical example of the *Newsletter*, the first issue of 1993, ran to eighty-seven double-column pages and contained discussions of cultural conservation matters and other professional issues, news of public sector activities throughout the country, and a directory of 177 entries for public sector folklore programs and independent folklorists. By contrast, the American Folklore Society’s *Journal of American Folklore (JAF)*, as well as other significant American folklore serials (*Western Folklore*, *Southern Folklore*) have devoted relatively little attention to public sector folklore, at least until recently. *JAF*, for instance, now prints reviews of some public sector presentations—exhibitions, festivals, and the like—and has included several articles on issues of authenticity and representation that draw on public sector experience.

The society’s annual meeting in late October, however, is the largest gathering of public sector folklorists in the country. Since the late 1980s, about one in every eight sessions at the meeting has been explicitly “about” public sector

folklore. (At the 1993 meeting, for example, 14 sessions of 115 total, at least one during every time slot in the program fit this description.) Many others are informed by current work in this area but have been given some other title. Other regional meetings offer more focused gatherings: Public sector folklorists from the Western states have met in parallel with Utah State University's annual Fife Folklore Conference since around 1980, and the Southern Arts Federation sponsors biannual retreats for folklorists from the Southeast.

Thus, there are many indications that the entire field of folklore and related fields of cultural study are again positively incorporating public sector work and are again incorporating as central those issues that have been at the heart of the public sector enterprise from the start. These include issues of *representation* (How are folk traditions, artists, and communities depicted through the work of folklorists and others?), *authority* (By whom are folk traditions, artists, and communities depicted and in whose terms?), *responsibility* (for informed, sensitive, and accurate representation), and *collaboration* (among tradition bearers, other community members, and folklorists or other outside workers to achieve the most appropriate representation).

Responding to these sorts of issues requires integrative education: extensive fieldwork experience; a solid grounding in the materials, history, theories, and techniques of the entire discipline of folklore (including the discipline's always-present public aspects); and direct experience in public sector folklore work, from teaching to presentation planning and community service, along with reflection on that work. For the most part, graduate programs in folklore and folklife do not provide public sector experience or reflection as a formal part of their curricula, though this is changing, especially at younger programs. The effective collaboration of community members and folklorists that is a goal of contemporary public sector folklore work also requires shared and integrative learning, based in carefully planned projects that serve communities well.

Timothy C. Lloyd

See Also Archives and Archiving; Folklife; Folklore; Museum, Folk.

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Puppetry

The manipulation of material images by human hands in dramatic or narrative performances. The world's peoples have devised a broad range of puppetry traditions over the centuries, some quite familiar and others virtually unknown outside of their originating communities. A number of well-known examples fit the definition precisely, ranging from the European glove puppets of the Punch-and-Judy type to the multi-stringed marionettes of Burma or Thailand, from the snake puppets of Hopi ritual dramas to the shadow puppets of the Malayo-Indonesian world, from the rod puppets of western Africa to the Japanese *bunraku*. But there are other performing traditions that challenge the boundaries of the definition, such as elaborate, larger-than-life-sized masquerades common throughout Africa or the processional giants of Western Europe, icons and other images used in sacred rituals that may not be conceived by their practitioners as "performances," the use by storytellers of scroll paintings or pictures to illustrate their narratives, or traditions of "flesh-and-blood" puppetry in which performers—often small children—imitate the stiff and conventionalized movements of puppets. Despite its global ubiquity, puppetry remains a relatively unstudied performance tradition (with some few exceptions), perhaps because it is often considered as a trivial genre of greatest interest to children. Increasingly in recent years, folklorists and other scholars have moved from simple historical accounts tracing the evolution of genres and characters to studies of actual performances and their dynamics.



Colorful puppets on a market stall in Kathmandu, Nepal. (Jeremy Richards/Dreamstime.com)

Although puppetry traditions can be classified functionally (e.g., sacred versus secular forms, serious versus humorous ones) or according to features of their performance (e.g., mute versus speaking puppets, those with music or those without, improvised versus scripted content), they are most often considered comparatively in terms of their formal-structural elements and means of animation. Marionettes are operated by means of strings or rods hanging from above (for instance, the *kathputli* puppets of Rajasthan or the *pupi* of Sicily, both of which enact historical legends). In glove puppets (or hand puppets), the puppeteer's hand fits inside the puppet's head, as for instance the French *Polichinelle* or Russian *Petrushka* (two cousins of the Punch-and-Judy family that also includes the German *Hanswurst*, Italian *Pulcinella*, and Egyptian *Aragouz*). Shadow puppets include opaque or translucent images, usually two-dimensional, that are displayed behind or in front of a screen, casting a shadow or being illuminated in relief; this form has been highly elaborated in China, India, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia. Rod puppets are distinguished from marionettes because the rods that are used to animate the puppets are operated from below rather than above; among the more familiar forms are the Japanese *bunraku*, the Indonesian *wayang golek*, and the Thai *khun lakhon lek*.

Cutting across these formal-structural categories are certain characteristics of puppetry performance traditions. Within each tradition, puppeteers have evolved various ways of giving voice to the puppet characters. Typically, the puppeteer provides

distinct voices for each of the puppet characters, who engage in dramatic dialogue with one another. The voices may be distinguished by speaking style, vocabulary, voice quality, or the use of distinct dialects or languages. The Indonesian *dalang* (puppeteer) makes use of different levels or styles of language (from colloquial to royal, informal to elegant) as well as different vocal qualities (smooth and gentle for refined characters and rough and abrupt for ruffians or clowns). Similarly, the chivalric marionettes of Liège or Palermo are endowed by their operators with identifiable voices and appropriate vocabularies and speaking styles. In other cases, the puppeteer is assisted by actors who provide the voices for each of the characters, as one or more manipulator operates the puppets. In many traditions (especially those of the Punch-and-Judy family), the puppeteer makes use of an instrument in his or her mouth that distorts the natural voice and produces a semi-nonsensical squeaking or buzzing voice. The puppeteer will then carry on a dialogue between the distorted voice and a natural one, often assisted by an interlocutor or musician who takes one of the parts in the dialogue. In other traditions, the spoken element of the performance takes the form of a narrative rather than a dialogue, and there is no effort to make it appear that the puppets are carrying on conversations among themselves.

The subject matter of puppetry performances may range from slapstick, topical humor, and ribaldry to highly serious sacred rituals. Often, puppets are used to enact semi-historical legends, such as the chivalric epics of Roland or Orlando or the Indic *Ramayana* epic. Such extended works may be presented serially, with each performance featuring a single episode, or in performances that last all night or several days. The *dramatis personae* may be numerous or relatively few. The Punch-Pulcinella-Petrushka tradition of glove puppets typically includes a handful of characters who engage the hero in dyadic encounters. These forms also typically feature a substantial degree of involvement by one or more members of the audience, and they often make humorous reference to the events of the day or the attributes of the spectators or their context. In repressive sociopolitical settings, puppets are a favorite voice for the downtrodden or rebellious since they may be granted a degree of license to make critical remarks that would be punished if uttered by human actors. And because they are not human, puppets can easily be beheaded or otherwise victimized. Folk puppetry traditions often have been taken up by elite artists and writers, who find them a flexible medium through which to engage in theatrical experimentation or innovation.

Frank Proschan

See Also Mask.

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R

Rapunzel

Long-haired heroine of a well-known folktale. Versions of this story are told throughout Europe, the Americas, and the West Indies, though the best-known version is probably the much-embellished fairy tale popularized by the Grimm brothers in 1812. In their telling, a man and wife wish for a child but have long been unable to have one. They live in a house overlooking a beautiful garden that belongs to a fearsome witch. One day, the woman looks into the fine garden and wishes for some radishes. Her obliging husband overcomes his fear of the witch, climbs over the high wall of the witch's garden, and helps himself to some radishes. He takes these home to his wife, who enjoys them so much that she desires more and cannot rest until she has them. Once again screwing up all his courage, her husband climbs into the witch's garden. But this time the witch is waiting for him. She is angry and threatens to cast an evil spell on the man. Hastily he explains his wife's desire for the radishes. The witch has an apparent change of heart and says that she can have all the radishes she wants on condition that the man and his wife allow the witch to have their child. In return, the witch promises she will care for the child. The man, in fear and confusion, agrees, probably thinking that as they have no child there is no need for concern.

However, a child is born to the man and his wife. They named her Rapunzel and "she grew to be the most beautiful child under the sun." On her twelfth birthday, the witch claims her according to the agreement with her father and locks her in a tower deep in the forest. The tower has no door and no stairs, only a small window at the top. When the witch wants to enter the tower, she stands down below and calls out, "Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair." Rapunzel then throws her long, golden tresses through the small window. Reaching down to the ground, Rapunzel's hair forms a silken ladder that the witch can use to climb in and out of the tower.

After a few years, a king's son happens to go near the tower and hears Rapunzel's lovely voice in song. He finds the tower but cannot enter and so rides home again. But every day he comes back and hides in the forest, listening to the entrancing melodies of Rapunzel's singing. One day he sees the witch approach the tower and call out to Rapunzel to throw her hair down; in this way he learns the secret of entry to the tower. The next day, he goes to the foot of the tower and calls out, "Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair." She does, and he climbs



Illustration from the Brothers Grimm's *Rapunzel* by Anne Anderson (1874–1930). (The Bridgeman Art Library International)

up. At first Rapunzel is frightened because apart from her father she has never seen a man before. The prince then seduces Rapunzel—though the Grimm tale says simply that he “talked in a loving way to her”—and the lovers plot Rapunzel’s escape. She tells the prince that each evening when he comes to her, he should bring a skein of silk, which she will then weave into a ladder that will allow her to escape with the prince. This plan proceeds happily until Rapunzel lets slip to the witch that the prince makes a visit on the day the witch is elsewhere. In a fury, the witch hits Rapunzel, cuts off her hair, and takes the girl to a desert, leaving her “to die in great misery and grief.”

Back at the tower, the witch ties the tresses to the window, and when the prince returns in search of his love, the witch throws the hair down as if all is well. When the prince reaches the top, he finds the witch waiting for him, and she tells him that his beloved is lost. In grief and fear he throws himself out the window, falling into thorns that break his fall but blind him. He then wanders the wild wood in mourning, living off berries and roots for many years, until one day he arrives at the desert where the witch had left Rapunzel to die. Hearing a familiar voice, he makes his way toward it. By some miracle, Rapunzel has survived and given birth to twins, a boy and a girl. Rapunzel recognizes her prince and embraces him, weeping for joy. Her tears fall upon his eyes, freeing him of blindness. The prince then takes Rapunzel (and, presumably, the twins) back to his kingdom “where he was received with great demonstrations of joy.”

In the usual manner of the fairy tale, events in this story occur with little or no motivation, preparation, or even logic. Rapunzel is inexplicably born to a previously barren couple for no good reason other than to fulfill the witch's condition that she should have the couple's child. The witch then locks Rapunzel away for no apparent purpose, in an isolated tower to which entry and exit is unnecessarily difficult. Rapunzel and the prince's escape plan is annoyingly long-winded. Why can't he simply bring back a rope on his next visit? Rapunzel, who shows no other signs of idiocy, blurts out the secret of her lover to the witch and then somehow survives in the desert, giving birth to twins and keeping them alive until the prince miraculously stumbles across his new family some years later. Her tears magically cure the prince's blindness, and he is free to take her back to his kingdom in the traditional fairy tale manner, though in the Grimms' version we are not told whether he also takes his two children or leaves them to perish in the desert.

Of course, in collusion with the genre of the fairy tale we suspend our disbelief for the reward of having the tension resolved in the happy ending, which, after all, is what these narratives are all about. The means by which the hero and heroine reach the end of the story are less important than the fact that they reach it and that things conclude with smiles all around. Even the defeat of the villain has not anywhere near the same importance as reaching the happy ending. In the fairy tale of Rapunzel, the pointlessly malevolent witch suffers no punishment for her actions.

We are, it seems, meant to interpret these stories and the often odd events that constitute them as metaphors. In the story of Rapunzel, the common motifs of the promised (usually female) child, the imprisonment to preserve the heroine's virginity, the rescue by the handsome prince (well, almost), the mutilation of the hero, his wandering in the wilderness, the abandonment in the desert, the healing power of the heroine's tears, and the inevitable happy closure are all classic elements of fairy tale fantasy—even though there is not a fairy in, or out, of sight.

Our need for such narratives has ensured their perpetual popularity. In the form we call the "fairy" tale, such stories date from the seventeenth century, and the earthier folktales on which many of the fairy tale encounters of princes, beautiful singing maidens, and the like are based date from some considerable number of centuries earlier. Scholars will continue to offer new interpretations of the significance of such fairy tales ("Rapunzel" being an obvious favorite for psychoanalytic approaches), while we continue to read them, turn them into films, and, sometimes, tell them to our children.

Graham Seal

See Also Cinderella; Fairy Tale Heroes; Jack and the Beanstalk; Sleeping Beauty; Snow White.

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Rebus

A term used to signify the representation of language “by means of things.” It is important to distinguish between the rebus principle, what I. J. Gelb calls the “principle of phonetization,” by which words or syllables are represented by drawings of homonyms, and the enigmatic representation of a name or phrase—or even whole texts—which employ the same, or similar, principles. The former was a stage in the development of writing systems, and the ancient Sumerians, out of practical necessity, represented their word *ti* (life) by a drawing of an arrow, which was also *ti* in Sumerian. The enigmatic representation of written language, a test of a reader's ability at mental gymnastics, clearly differs from a practical system of writing, which requires speed and accuracy.

Because Western societies have become increasingly linear in their conception of language since the invention of print—a phenomenon intensified not only by the Reformation, with its insistence upon the “word,” but also by the relatively recent emergence of computer technology, with its assumption of strings of alphanumerics—mention must be made of what is called *pattern poetry*, the combination of the visual and the linguistic or literary. Like the term *shaped poetry*, *pattern poetry* was coined in the nineteenth century in an attempt to signify the variety of similar attempts at cojoining the visual and the verbal in different cultures and in different eras. *Hieroglyphic poetry* is yet another term for the same phenomenon. The overall shape of these texts either suggests or reinforces their meanings, as, most literally, in George Herbert's well-known poem, “Easter Wings.”

Rebuses may be seen to be hieroglyphic poems in style but with a larger proportion of enigma involved. Rather than reinforcing meaning, rebuses seem more

often to distract from it because they are literal puns. A drawing of an eye followed by a drawing of a saw does not necessarily suggest “I saw.” That example, of course, conforms to Gelb’s notion of the principle of phonetization, with one word or syllable represented by a drawing of a more concrete homonym. In more modern societies, however, words are sufficiently stable that they have become things, and as a result, a nonpictorial rebus (i.e., a literal rebus) is the following: HAbirdND = BUtwoSH (“A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush”), with the only clue to its resolution being the change in type. A different kind of rebus, WORL signifies “world without end.” It is of no little significance that the word processor used to write this entry makes it impractical to represent less linear rebuses, such as those that signify “back-up lights” and “John Underwood, Andover, Mass.” Such rebuses, playing as they do upon our left-to-right linear concept of language representation, violate assumptions about language that underlie our word-processing software. Thus, the workaday-world practicality of computer technology reinforces the “enigmatic” quality of rebuses. Rebuses today are generally considered humor for children or, at best, “language arts” exercises in elementary schools; illustrative examples are David A. Adler’s *Happy Thanksgiving Rebus* and Lisa Rojany’s *Story of Hanukkah: A Lift-the-Flap Rebus Book*. In the late eighteenth century, however, a number of “hieroglyphic epistles” were printed on broadsides for adult readers. One of these was printed by W. Allen, Dame Street, Dublin, in 1779. It begins as follows (an interpretation is enclosed in brackets following each word that involves rebuses of the various kinds):

Ewer [Your] H-eye-ness’s [Highness’s] E-pistol [Epistle] Came Safe toe [to] hand [hand], eye [I] Have S-hoe-n [Shown] it toe [to] awl [all] m-eye [my] friends on ear-th [earth], w-hoe [who] r [are] glad toe [to] hare [hear] t-hat [that] T-hare [there] Is so good an Under-stand-ing [understanding] bee-tween [between] us, and t-hat [that] eye [I] am lick-ly [likely] toe [to] bee [be] ass [as] grate [great] a favor-ite [favorite] bee-low [below] ass [as] eye [I] am hare [here].

Printed in Ireland and on a topic that concerns England, this hieroglyphic epistle lends itself to a pro-revolution reading through its many uses of “pistol” and even “hoe,” weapons of the Irish peasantry that were not included in the printing of a variant of this broadside in Scotland. Thus, such rebus writing may contain a higher level of meaning than the literal, but on the literal level, this item illustrates a range of practices that contradict Gelb’s idea of one syllable or word for one image. Here, there is a mixture of ways of representing spoken syllables and words (Under-stand-ing) and their spelling (t-hat). Indeed, this text plays off of the various ways we read and speak. If we consider its possibly revolutionary

intent, we should not consider its arbitrary mix of rebus applications out of line. In its complexity, it contrasts strikingly with the various “hieroglyphic” Bibles and love letters of the period.

Rebus writing has a long history, and the play with those principles has a shorter history. That certain words, word fragments, and syllables were represented in conventional ways within a given culture should surprise no one because the fit between the available visual images and the current state of language is ever-shifting. That a subversive representation should have developed in a country as repressed as Ireland also should surprise no one.

Michael J. Preston

See Also Enigma, Folk.

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Recitation

Orally performed and rhetorically mannered spoken delivery of verse or prose text, usually prepared and often memorized. Cross-culturally, recitation is ancient in practice, transglobal, and considerably varied in secular and sacred performance evidence. Presumably, the historically distant roots of recitation reside in face-to-face encounters dependent largely, if not exclusively, upon spoken rather than inscribed dissemination of public oratory, collective oral history, oral-formulaic verse, entertaining and edifying passages, and the like. Oral recitation is not restricted by gender or age, and it pertains to many genres of verbalized folk and popular culture literature. As performed rhetoric, recitation lends itself to a range of oratorical style options based on a combination of text content, conventional norms, and individual predispositions. The term *recitation* is

widely employed in reference to rhythmic chanting, metered declamation, and “theatrically” stylized oral performance of texts, though straightforward and understated renditions occur as well. Often, recitation offers opportunities for showcasing self as performer, while accompanying vocal inflections and body gestures inform and encourage within audience members the reciter’s interpretation of and emotive response to the text.

Pluralized, the term *recitations* refers to folk verse, rhymed popular poetry, and prose either specifically intended in composition for recitation delivery or subsequently lending itself to it. A closely related term, *monologues*, refers more narrowly to narrative prose or narrative poetic selections rendered as recitation. In usage, the latter term appears primarily identified with late-Victorian and early twentieth-century British Isles popular culture, notably in England, where allusion to “monologues” appears in the titles of numerous printed elocutionary manuals, anthologies, and folios. Intended for mass-audience appeal and dissemination, these sources feature recitation texts often identified with renowned and professionalized public entertainers (e.g., Billy Bennett and Stanley Holloway) affiliated with music halls, burlesque, vaudeville, and early commercial sound recordings. To some extent, as in Newfoundland, Canada, and elsewhere in anglophonic tradition, the inclusive terminology *recitations* and *monologues* exists in popular culture and scholarly currency as an accepted alternative to recitations per se (hence, analogous to the usage “folksongs and ballads”). However, many performers and most folklorists opt for the latter term, *monologue*, when referring to both the materials and the performance of recitations.

Considered internationally, recitation among adults includes oral epics and sagas; accolades and memorial tributes; formulaic incantations and sayings; mock-serious and parodic speeches; rhymed verse such as toasts and limericks; and innumerable dramatic, descriptive, sentimental, and homiletic poems and prose passages in whole or part attributable to anonymous or known authorship. Humorous, erotic, bawdy, and obscene recitation texts exist as well, sometimes coincident with the aforementioned examples. Adult recitation is also found as an alternative to the singing of lyrical, descriptive, or narrative song texts; for Western Europe, Scandinavia, Great Britain, and North America, evidence includes recited folk ballads. Elsewhere and documented during the twentieth century, adult recitation traditions in North America include folk verse circulated among occupational workers and within rural communities; urban street vendors’ “spiels”; prison inmate verse; and chanted oral sermons found in various white and African American Protestant religious service observances. In the British Isles, recitations are presented (as in, “I’ll give you a humorous poem”) at social drinking pubs, folk clubs, and staged heritage festivals. In the British West Indies, Afro-Caribbean declaimed speeches occur at “tea meeting” social gatherings; in Australia, there are “bush recitations” (“bush verse,” “bush ballads”) at

social drinking pubs; and in Canada, dialect poems and monologues are recited at house parties and community entertainment events (“times”). The preceding examples single out reports from the English language; a more comprehensive and indicative survey would include a vast compilation of evidence from additional world culture areas, countries, linguistic traditions, and folk groups. This observation holds as well for documented recitation evidence among children.

Numerous collections and accompanying commentary have dealt with childlore recitation. In its Western European, British Isles, and North American manifestations, examples include childhood recitations of traditional verse accompanying folk games; recited parodies of well-known, adult literary passages and revered songs; “tangle-talk” mock speeches and nonsense verse; chanted boasts and taunts; and, primarily among urban adolescents and young adults affiliated with street gangs, reciting of mini-epic rhymed folk verse that boasts of real or fantasized contest and conquest.

Since the 1970s, a number of folklorists in Great Britain, Australia, and the United States—together with recitation performers—have singled out, for greater attention, late-Victorian, Edwardian, and twentieth-century English-language popular poetry as a primary source for reciters dually influenced by anglophonic folk tradition and popular culture antecedents. Whether labeled *popular poetry*, *vernacular popular poetry*, or *poetry of the people*, such rhymed verse compositions are distinguishable from *elite poetry* by their commonplace diction and tendency to present subject matter dealing with real or fictional adventure, faraway dramatic encounter, community happenstance, or rural domestic experience. Narrative and humorous popular poetry recitation texts, often authored and performed by men, appear to outnumber others; women’s authored and performed texts, at least in anglophonic tradition, are frequently lyrical, sentimental, and homiletic. Many widely circulated popular poetry compositions are attributable to regionally, nationally, and internationally known authors: in England, notably Rudyard Kipling and George R. Sims; in Canada, Robert W. Service and William Henry Drummond; in Australia, A. B. Paterson and Henry Lawson; in the United States, Eugene Field and Will Carleton. In the western United States, rhymed popular poetry suited to oral recitation has flourished among cowboys and ranchers since the late 1800s, and there are numerous renowned and lesser-known self-identified “bunkhouse folk poets” within their ranks. In the late twentieth century, American “cowboy poetry” in four-line or longer stanzas vies with Australian “bush verse” as ongoing, freshly creative, and commercially evolving oral recitation within conventions and precedents found worldwide. Representative and widely heralded twentieth-century American cowboy and rancher poet-reciters include Curley Fletcher, Baxter Black, and Waddie Mitchell; Australian counterparts include C. J. Dennis and others who have foregrounded their continent’s history, popular culture, and western Queensland bush.

In all, oral recitation endures from ancient times into the present in diversified textual evidence and situated occasioning. Increasingly, inquiries into the phenomenon

among adults need to contend with expanding global public access to printed publications, audio recordings, radio and television, videotape, emerging electronic and computer media, and commercial popular culture generally. Tourism-related displays and events that serve nostalgia sometimes introduce new and wider audiences to reciters and the recitation format. Emergent commercial outlets also may bring established recitation tradition to mass-public familiarity, as happened with the rhymed “rap” recitations found in American popular music since the late 1970s, which derived from African American “street poetry” current a generation earlier. Scholars might also consider the indebtedness, interconnections, or departure of childlore recitation texts and performances from those of culture-sharing adults. Whatever and wherever the evidence, recitation continues as one of the major oral performance varieties in global consideration.

Robert D. Bethke

See Also Oral-Formulaic Theory; Performance; Popular Culture.

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Regional Approach

An approach that considers distinctive constellations of traditional expressive forms performed in a specific area, with a particular emphasis on those that exist

in a mutually responsive relationship with the area. Although *all* of the folklore of a particular place is important and can reveal much about its inhabitants, contemporary folklorists distinguish between *the folklore of regions* and *regional folklore*. Regional folklore, unlike traditions that appear and function widely, exists in what Archie Green calls a “reflexive” relationship with a spatially defined group, rather than one conceptualized on the basis of such other factors as age, gender, occupation, ethnicity, avocation, or lifestyle. Truly regional folklore expresses and articulates a place’s worldview, while at the same time shaping and informing it. In other words, as Green puts it, “Lore delineates region and region delimits lore. In either direction each turns back, or is bent, to the other” (Green 1978). This reflexivity is not operative insofar as the folklore of regions is concerned. For example, catastrophe jokes, the proverb “Haste makes waste,” the ballad “Barbara Allen,” and the belief that a copper bracelet cures arthritis are part of the traditional inventories of many regions, but *corridos* (Mexican American folk ballads), stories about the Brown Mountain lights, sneakboxes (small boats made and used by duck hunters in southern New Jersey), sang hoes (three-pronged hoes for extracting ginseng), and the ballad “Talt Hall” are most certainly not. Moreover, these latter forms are inextricably connected to the specific geographic contexts in which they appear, both expressing regionality and informing it. As Barre Toelken puts it: “We learn our culture by hearing its expressions, and we in turn express our culture whenever we engage in performing any of its vernacular genres” (Allen & Schlereth 1990). Indeed, regional analysis provides excellent insights into the relationships between people, their place, and their lore. Understanding spatially defined groups enhances our understanding of their folklore, and the regionally bound folklore facilitates our understanding of the group: To know Appalachian folklore, we must know Appalachia; to know Appalachia, we must know its folklore. Whether concerned with the folklore of regions or regional folklore, however, most folklorists would agree with Howard Odum and Harry Moore, who write in *American Regionalism* that the “geographic factor” is the “mudsill” of the concept of regionalism and that “social phenomena may best be understood when considered in relation to the area in which they occur as a cultural frame of reference” (Odum & Moore 1938).

During the first few decades of American folklore scholarship, many folklorists were interested in the “geographic factor,” framing the traditions they collected in spatial terms. These studies focused on the folklore of regions, paying little attention to regional theory or analysis, but they nevertheless afforded valuable texts and indicated that scholars were at least thinking about the connections between land and lore. Perhaps the first regional folklore collection in the United States was the 1867 book *Slave Songs of the United States*, in which the authors, William Francis Allen, Charles P. Ware, and Lucy M. Garrison, arranged 136

songs according to a geographical scheme, presenting them as belonging to either the “South-Eastern Slave States,” the “Northern Seaboard Slave States,” or the “Inland Slave States.” A few years later, the folklore of such regions as New England, the Southwest, and Appalachia began appearing in the *Journal of American Folklore*. Many of these articles provided excellent texts but very little else, sorely frustrating modern folklorists. For example, in 1925, Isabel Gordon Carter published several Jack tales (*Märchen* that had been “regionalized”) in the *Journal of American Folklore*. After an introductory paragraph, she included only four more short paragraphs of contextual data, pointing out only that her informant, Jane Gentry, learned the stories from her grandfather, who had learned them from his mother. Was Gentry referring to “Old Counce” Harmon, her mother’s father, or to her *paternal* grandfather, who was a Hicks? And what relationship was there between the stories and the title of Carter’s article “Mountain White Folk-Lore: Tales from the Southern Blue Ridge”? The texts in the article are unquestionably important; they are perhaps the purest Jack tales we have from the rich Hicks-Harmon family repertoire. But fuller contextual information and some discussion of the connections between the stories and the Appalachian experience would have made Carter’s study even more valuable.

Among other early collections of the folklore of regions were those of Alcée Fortier in Louisiana (1895), E. C. Perrow in the South (1912), E. M. Fogel in the Pennsylvania Dutch country (1915), and Aurelio M. Espinosa in the Southwest (1915). Important regional work in the 1920s includes studies by Fanny Hardy Eckstorm and Mary Winslow Smyth in Maine, Josiah H. Combs in Appalachia, and Newbell N. Puckett and John H. Cox in the South.

No doubt motivated by widespread dissatisfaction with collective American society, scholars produced an explosion of regional studies during the 1930s, with the “Twelve Southerners” setting the charge in their 1930 document “A Statement of Principles,” which proclaimed that the South was indeed a distinctive section, defined primarily by its agrarianness, and that it deserved the right to determine itself and to resist “joining up behind” the American industrial way of life. Writers, historians, geographers, economists, and the federal government all embraced the concept of regionalism. Leading the way for folklorists was Benjamin A. Botkin, editor from 1929 to 1932 of *Folk-Say: A Regional Miscellany*, who became folklore editor for the Federal Writers’ Project, a New Deal effort to celebrate the culture of ordinary Americans. Botkin coordinated intense collecting activities, later publishing the materials in several regional “treasuries”: New England (1947), the South (1949), the West (1951), and the Mississippi River (1955). A golden age of folklore collecting within regions, the 1930s produced numerous works grounded in spatial dimensions. Collectors and their respective regions include Harry M. Hyatt in Adams County, Illinois; Phillips Barry in Maine; Frank C. Brown and Ralph Steele Boggs in North Carolina;

Thomas Brendle in southeastern Pennsylvania; J. Frank Dobie and Mody Boatright in Texas; Hans Kurath in New England; Louise Pound in Nebraska; George Pullen Jackson in the upland South; and Richard Chase, John Jacob Niles, and Cecil Sharp in Appalachia. The best of these collections was Emelyn E. Gardner's *Folklore from the Schoharie Hills, New York*, published in 1937. In addition to providing some excellent texts, Gardner included brief impressions of the region's people, gave a geographical description of the area, discussed local history, and distinguished between folklore "collected elsewhere in the United States" (e.g., "Pretty Polly") and "Schoharie localizations," such as place-name legends, tall tales relating to a local hero, legends concerning area resistance to rent collectors, and four "crude" ballads about local characters. Gardner's work was a firm step in the direction toward the maturation of regional folkloristics.

Collecting organized according to state boundaries continued into the 1940s—John Lomax in Texas, Henry M. Belden in Missouri—but, like Gardner, some folklorists concentrated on cultural and physiographic regions: George Korson in the mining districts of Pennsylvania, Austin E. and Alta S. Fife and Levette J. Davidson in Mormon Utah, Vance Randolph in the Ozarks, and Lelah Allison

Localization

The process by which folklore develops to conform to the preferred patterns of folk cultural regions; alternatively, the products of such a process. Folk cultural regions are self-conscious, multileveled assemblies of folk as specific as "Arizona White River Apache" and as broad as "the Southwest," but members of all regions share a traditional aesthetic sense that regulates folklore. Localization reshapes lore to fit these varied senses of form.

Literary folklorists analyzed texts as products of localization and found that characters' names and the settings of oral folklore were frequently localized. One of the most notable Anglo-American ballad localizations, for example, is the substitution of familiar names for unfamiliar ones, so that names acceptable to audience and performers replace characters of long ago or far away in localized versions.

The settings of folk narrative are also frequently localized in response to the traditions of folk cultural regions. Most Anglo-American urban legends, for example, are introduced as having happened recently and nearby, but they lack exact settings.

Field-based folklorists and anthropologists concentrated upon the localization of folklore performance and upon the process by which localization took place. Field researchers investigating localization focused on the unconscious process of selection and adaptation by which folk cultural regions create their lore. Localization, in both the literary and field research senses of the term, is an important concept in cultural studies, explaining one of the major ways in which folklore develops and examining the results of this process.

Keith Cunningham

Uncle Billy McCrea (right) with John A. Lomax (center), and friends, at Billy's home in Jasper, Texas, September 1940. (Library of Congress)



and Grace Partridge Smith in the twenty-five-county area in southern Illinois known as “Egypt.”

But in these studies, there was no consistency in the use of the term *region*, collecting was generally haphazard rather than systematic, scant attention was given to contextual data, and there was very little reflexive (or any other kind of) analysis. Surveying these collections in 1947, Herbert Halpert, who had himself advanced the status of the field in his dissertation on the New Jersey Pine Barrens a few years earlier, reported that most of them were little more than lists of texts with inbred notes and that the collectors failed to provide adequate descriptions of the cultures with which they were concerned. Halpert went on to call for more sophisticated regional studies.

Halpert's call was answered in 1952 with Richard M. Dorson's *Bloodstoppers and Bearwalkers*, a study of Michigan's Upper Peninsula region. Basing her comments largely on Dorson's “analysis of the place and the people who live there,” reviewer Thelma James referred to the book as “the pattern for regional collections and studies in American folklore.” Dorson indeed discussed the regional context in the book, and he devoted over a third of it to “The Native Tradition,” exploring at length local beliefs, customs, legends, and anecdotes. Barbara Allen, in commenting on the importance of the book in *Sense of Place*, pointed out that its implicit message “is that the folklore of the Upper Peninsula is truly a regional product, a response to residents' experiences there.” Though

perhaps not as paradigmatic as *Bloodstoppers and Bearwalkers*, regional collections continued to appear in the 1950s, including those of Harold E. Briggs (Egypt), Horace P. Beck (Maine), Don Yoder (Pennsylvania), J. Mason Brewer (Texas), Ray B. Browne (Alabama), Harry Oster (Louisiana), and Leonard Roberts (eastern Kentucky). The jewel in the crown of regional folklore scholarship in the 1950s, however, was Américo Paredes's "*With His Pistol in His Hand*": *A Border Ballad and Its Hero*. "It was a peculiar set of conditions," wrote Paredes (1958), "that produced the Lower Border *corrido*," a ballad form typical of the Lower Rio Grande Valley region, half in Mexico, half in the United States. Devoting the entire book to the ballad about the outlaw Gregorio Cortez, Paredes provided detailed discussions of the history, geography, and culture of the region, explaining how the song dramatized cultural conflict along "the Border." As Allen observed, the book was "pivotal"; it moved regional folkloristics even further from the folklore of regions to a study of truly regional folklore.

Paredes's book had not appeared, however, when, in 1957, Richard Dorson delivered to an impressive symposium of scholars his "theory of American folklore," in which he complained that most of the regional collections still remained "on the level of text-hunting motivated chiefly by convenience and emotional identification with a locality." Dorson, like Halpert ten years earlier, urged that American regional collecting "be tied to theoretical questions," insisting that "a series of planned and coordinated field trips is necessary in place of the casual and haphazard collecting that is now the practice." Two years later, in the "Regional Folk Cultures" chapter of *American Folklore*, Dorson offered as a model the results of his own fieldwork in two communities in Maine, along with what others had collected in German Pennsylvania, the Ozarks, Spanish New Mexico, and the Utah Mormon region. By the end of the 1950s, regional folklore studies had established a secure position in American folklore scholarship.

This position was strengthened in 1964 with Dorson's *Buying the Wind: Regional Folklore in the United States*, a book-length expansion of his regional folklore chapter in *American Folklore*. One reviewer called this work "the first scholarly anthology of regional American folklore." Omitting the Ozarks, perhaps because Vance Randolph had published five books on the subject, Dorson added units on Egypt, Appalachia, and the Louisiana Bayou. The subtitle notwithstanding, the book focused as much on ethnicity as it did on geography, but at the time, it was nevertheless the most responsible collection of American folklore considered on the basis of "place," and it provided an excellent bibliography of regional folklore studies. Dorson mulled over the idea of regional folklore for the next several years, eventually persuading two of his graduate students to pursue the topic.

Regional collections continued to appear throughout the 1960s—S. J. Sackett and William E. Koch's *Kansas Folklore* and Ruth Ann Musick's book on West

Virginia ghost tales, for example—but the decade is best characterized by the integration of folkloric and geographic approaches. Geographers had been interested in the concept of regionalism since the publication in 1789 of Jedidiah Morse's *American Geography*, in which the author attempted to make explicit implied assumptions about major American "sections," but oddly, substantial geographically oriented folklore studies did not appear until 1968. That year saw the publication of the cultural geographer E. Joan Wilson Miller's "Ozark Culture Region as Revealed by Traditional Materials," in which Miller argued that "regionalized" folklore (specifically, narratives collected by Vance Randolph) could contribute to "an understanding of forms and processes of settlement" within a cultural region. Miller (1968) later suggested that superstitions, too, could facilitate the discovery of a region's "resource base," which supplies the physical and spiritual needs of a folk group. Also in 1968, Alan Lomax published *Folk Song Style and Culture*, a collection of essays supporting his thesis that singing styles defined large, worldwide musical regions. And 1968 was the year that Henry Glassie, following Fred Kniffen's groundbreaking work on the diffusion of folk house types, published his influential *Pattern in the Material Culture of the Eastern United States*. Like Lomax, Glassie identified regions on the basis of folk cultural expressions, in this case, architecture and artifacts. The book represents the high watermark of geographical folklore scholarship.

This geographically oriented folklore approach carried over into the 1970s, especially in the work of W. F. H. Nicolaisen, who became involved with the Society for the North American Cultural Survey, a consortium of geographers, folklorists, anthropologists, and historians that has as its mission the production of an atlas of North American cultures. Nicolaisen's interest in "the reciprocal ways in which folklore creates region while at the same time being shaped by it" mirrored exactly Archie Green's thinking outlined in "Reflexive Regionalism," which appeared in 1978. Regional theory also was advanced by Suzi Jones in her 1976 article "Regionalization: A Rhetorical Strategy," in which she, like Miller, emphasized the importance of transformations of folk materials based on a response to a specific place. Other important regional studies in the 1970s were those of Henry Glassie on folk housing in Middle Virginia, Roger Welsch's work on tall tales in the northern plains, and George Carey's study on the folklore of both Maryland and the Eastern Shore. Moreover, Richard Dorson, perhaps thinking about his upcoming handbook on American folklore, encouraged two of his graduate students, Howard Marshall and William E. Lightfoot, to undertake regional projects for their dissertations at Indiana University. Marshall, in "The Concept of Folk Region in Missouri: The Case of Little Dixie" (1976), analyzed both verbal and nonverbal traditions, especially those that tended to reveal "regional personality," concluding that architecture most clearly expressed Little Dixie's identification "as an island of Southern folk culture in the lower

Midwest.” (Marshall’s study was published in 1981 as *Folk Architecture in Little Dixie: A Regional Culture in Missouri*.) Lightfoot concentrated on “Folklore of the Big Sandy Valley of Eastern Kentucky” (1976), also focusing on traditions that displayed regional integrity. Two studies emerging from this work were “The Ballad ‘Talt Hall’ in Regional Context” (1978) and “Regional Folkloristics” (which appeared in Dorson’s 1983 *Handbook of American Folklore*); in this piece, Lightfoot proposed a methodology for regional folklore scholarship that he applied to an analysis of the Big Sandy local ballad “Sam Adams.” Dorson was keen on having regional folklore represented in the *Handbook*, and he included several more essays on the subject.

The essays in the *Handbook* were grounded deeply in the notion of *reflexivity* and were indeed analyses of regional folklore rather than the folklore of regions. Marta Weigle, for example, pointed out that traditional materials of the Southwest both *affect* and *effect* Southwesterners’ expressions of themselves and their region’s distinctiveness. Jan Harold Brunvand discussed the esoteric-exoteric dimensions of folk speech in Utah and the Mountain West, and Edward D. Ives explored the nature of locally composed songs that share “a special provenience,” Maine and the Maritime Provinces of Canada. José E. Limón analyzed “the special regional experience” that generated an extensive body of folklore concerning social conflict along the U.S.-Mexico border, and Robert B. Klymasz examined the generally friendly folklore of the Canadian-American border. In his introduction to the unit, Dorson referred to such concepts as *identity* and *consciousness*, terms that were then becoming characteristic of regional folklore scholarship. Mention should also be made of Dorson’s *Land of the Millrats* (1981), a coordinated team effort to record and analyze the folklore of an urban region—northern Indiana’s Calumet complex. Another major source of work in regional folklore in the 1980s was the Library of Congress-based American Folklife Center, part of whose mission is the preservation of regional cultures. The center has sponsored intensive folklife projects in such regions as “Wiregrass” Georgia, northern Nevada, the Blue Ridge Mountains, and the New Jersey Pinelands.

Regional folkloristics was advanced further in 1990 with the publication of *Sense of Place: American Regional Cultures*. Framed with essays by its editors, Barbara Allen and Thomas J. Schlereth, the book’s ten studies all focused on the reciprocal interaction between place and folk, showing how folklore is both a product of and stimulant to regional group consciousness and how it simultaneously reflects and reinforces regional identity. Roughly half of the essays were concerned with verbal traditions. Barre Toelken, for example, explained how vernacular expressions—jokes, tall tales, legends, and anecdotes—“grow out of, and give voice to” the collective value system of the American West. Larry Danielson discussed the ways in which beliefs, sayings, and stories “crystallize”

profound concerns about weather in the Great Plains “breadbasket” area, expressing “a distinctive identification with one’s regional home.” Local historical legends were found by Polly Stewart to be vehicles for the expression of strong “us-versus-them” attitudes among residents of Maryland’s Eastern Shore, and Barbara Allen showed how folk speech in a Kentucky community reflects Southerners’ intense sense of place, perhaps the “hallmark” of their regional identity. Illustrating his thesis with both verbal and nonverbal examples, John Michael Coggeshall explained how speech, legends, religious rituals, foodways, and material culture establish bases for regional identity in southern Illinois’ “Egypt.” Three of the essays focused on material culture exclusively. Mary Hufford, for example, described the Barnegat Bay sneakbox, a small skiff used for duck hunting in coastal New Jersey, as a boat comprising “a distinctive response to distinctively regional conditions, a tool whereby local men distinguish themselves as inhabitants of a singular region.” Richard E. Meyer explored the ways in which both visual and verbal images on grave markers form a significant part of collective regional self-image not only of people in Oregon’s Willamette Valley but also of Pacific Northwesterners in general. Charles E. Martin analyzed the power of a collective Appalachian regional aesthetic that prohibits individual self-expression, forcing artists to conceal personal expressivity within utilitarian productions. Another study of how regions define form was that of William E. Lightfoot, who described the concatenation of historical, demographic, and physiographic forces in a two-county area in western Kentucky that produced the distinctive regional guitar-playing style known as “Travis-picking,” which became a prominent instrumental element of commercial country music. Finally, Erika Brady suggested that the traditional skill of fur trapping represents the nexus of many aspects of regional identity among residents of the southern Missouri Ozarks. In characterizing these studies, editor Barbara Allen once again evoked the idea of “reflexivity,” writing that the subjects of the essays were “regional cultures and the regional consciousness that both shapes and is shaped by them.” The reflexive process is indeed the very heart of regional folkloristics.

The essays in *Sense of Place* had a profound impact on the thinking of the American studies scholar Kent C. Ryden, whose 1993 book *Mapping the Invisible Landscape: Folklore, Writing, and the Sense of Place* explored the ways in which narratives—both oral and written—create and communicate what he called a regional insider’s “invisible landscape,” a term that he suggested is identical to “regional consciousness.” Believing that folklore “vivifies” geography, Ryden analyzed field-collected narratives in order to better understand the culture of northern Idaho’s Coeur d’Alene mining district.

Another important regional study by a nonfolklorist that nevertheless relied heavily on traditional materials was the 1989 book *Albion’s Seed: Four British*

Folkways in America, by the historian David Hackett Fischer. Indeed, it was Fischer's thesis that four sets of British folkways—from East Anglia, southern England, the northern Midlands, and the Borderlands—became the basis of the four original regional cultures in America: the Massachusetts Puritans, the Virginia Cavaliers, the Delaware Valley Quakers, and the Backcountry borderers, respectively. Fischer illustrated this thesis by extensive analyses of the folklore of the four regions.

Although regional folklore studies have matured considerably and have proven useful to scholars in several other disciplines, there is still very little consistency in regional folklore theory. The concept of “region” is so ambiguous and imprecise as to virtually undo itself. For example, the “regions” mentioned here range from the 5,500-mile Canadian-American border to large groups of states (the South) to smaller groups of states (the Southwest) to areas that include parts of states (Appalachia) to single states to clusters of several counties (Egypt) to small groups of counties (Big Sandy) to single counties (Adams County, Illinois). Regions are defined willy-nilly on the bases of physical characteristics, states of mind, political maneuverings, uniformity of cultural traits, distinctiveness, collective personality, consciousness, and single-trait variables. In forty-one definitions of region listed by Odum and Moore, twenty-five were based on notions of “uniformity,” with eight emphasizing “distinctiveness”; four combined the two ideas. “Consciousness” and “identity” would appear frequently. But “uniformity” or “homogeneity” would certainly not characterize Egypt or Appalachia, both of which contain several ethnic groups and social classes within their boundaries. It is doubtful that Glassie's upland South region, which extends from southern Pennsylvania to Birmingham, Alabama, and includes portions of fourteen states, has a distinct personality or consciousness. The practice of snake handling helps to define Appalachia, but it is not exclusive to that region, and even if the ritual were performed there, it would not define Salina, Kansas. Most people in Central City, Kentucky, are probably unaware that they belong to the “Shultz-Travis” region. Although theoretical concepts may be fuzzy, the notion of “place” and folk responses to place remain central to regional folklore scholarship.

William E. Lightfoot

See Also Localization; Oikotype/Oicotype.

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Religion, Comparative

An academic discipline devoted to the general study of religions on a comparative basis. The approach is characterized by nondenominational and interdisciplinary research into the phenomena classified as religions, worldviews, and similar systems of thought. Other labels for the discipline are *comparative study of religions*, *the academic study of religions*, *history of religions*, *religious studies*, or *Allgemeine* or *Vergleichende Religionswissenschaft* in German. As an independent academic discipline and an approach to the study of humanity in relation to mind, society, and culture, the approach dates back to the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century. Although such materials for the study of human religiosity as, for instance, rock paintings, archaeological findings, and historical reports of travelers, explorers, and missionaries were available prior to the nineteenth century, the intellectual atmosphere did not support the independent general study of religions as an expression of human concerns over the uncertainty and mysteries of life and limitations of human existence.

The comparative study of religion emerged in Western Europe, and for that reason, it has a very close link with ideological and social developments in the Western world. In fact, the concept of religion in its present use stems from the Age of Enlightenment, when it was first used in the present Western sense as a discrete sphere of activity. The intellectual atmosphere, however, was not congenial to the fostering of comparative and non-dogmatic study of other religions until the nineteenth century.

An ambitious effort to study religious phenomena from a comparative perspective was impossible before the realization of the existence of non-Judeo-Christian

religions. The acceptance of non-Western sources of interpretation of the social and physical universe coincided with the discovery of the vast new territories and enabled the realization of the great variety of human religious experiences and beliefs in, particularly, Asia and Africa. The idea of regarding Christianity as merely one of the religions, with no need to label other beliefs as heretical or pagan, preceded and enabled the development of the comparative study of religions. The whole appearance of the concept of religion as a plural phenomenon required a shift from the monopoly of the Roman Catholic Church into a plural interpretation of Christianity itself in Europe. It is also important to realize that comparative religion is not an atheistic discipline but includes atheism as an object of study as well. It should be added that comparative religion, maintaining the goal of a greater understanding of both religions and secularization processes, does not advocate any single faith or ideology.

Comparative religion originated in two different fields of inquiry: philology and anthropology. German scholar F. Max Müller is credited with establishing the philological strand of comparative religion in the 1860s. He was a specialist in Indian classical languages and the “science of religion.” The philological study of that period relied mainly on the textual sources of such great Asian religions as Hinduism and Buddhism. The anthropological approach to the study of religion was developed by British scholars E. B. Tylor (1832–1917) and James G. Frazer (1854–1941). This orientation was based on the theory of nonlinear cultural evolution, and the research material consisted of reports produced by people other than the scholars themselves and centered on the problems of the origin of religion and so-called primitive religion.

The term *study of religion* is usually qualified as *general* or *comparative*. In German-speaking countries, for example, the field is referred to either as *Allgemeine* or *Vergleichende Religionswissenschaft*; in the anglophonic world the terms *comparative religion* or (*academic*) *study of religions* are predominant. In the Scandinavian languages, *religionshistoria* has gained an established position, denoting the study of religion in general even though *history of religion* is usually defined as only one of the five main branches of the study of religion, along with the phenomenology of religion, the sociology of religion, the psychology of religion, and the anthropology of religion. The term *comparative religion* is thus a kind of an umbrella for many different approaches to and methods of dealing with religion as a historical, cultural, and individual phenomenon considered in space and time. This list of subjects reveals how varied the viewpoints and problems encountered in the study of religion are. The methods used in different branches of religious study often are not profoundly different from those applied in the corresponding general disciplines.

The *history of religion* focuses on the central problems of the origins of religions and their historical development. Thorough source criticism of the obtained

material in order to prove its historical and religious value is a fundamental part of such study, and the methods used depend on the nature and quality of the material. It is common practice to divide religions into two categories, depending on whether their sources are principally in written documents or oral traditions. In the former case—in the so-called historical, or literate, religions—the study is based primarily on the historical analysis of texts and documents. In the case of cultures not based on written materials, known as primitive or illiterate (nonliterate) religions, conclusions concerning their history have to be arrived at on the basis of oral tradition.

The *phenomenology of religion* is principally a comparative discipline. Its task is to seek out regularly occurring patterns, repeatedly encountered phenomena, and recurring structures and functions in the religious field. The phenomena studied need not necessarily be interdependent from the point of view of their genetic history. The phenomenology of religion is more interested in the phenomena than in the historical relationships among them. The material is usually arranged not chronologically but systematically. The task of religious phenomenology is to classify various forms, structures, and functions of religions. The approach corresponds, to a large extent, to the study of structures and substructures in cultural anthropology. Methods of typological comparison have been very important for this kind of study. As in cultural anthropology, cross-cultural research occupies a prominent position, offering more-exact methods for measuring differences between cultural mechanisms and finding common denominators. In contemporary practice, the phenomenology of religion aims to ensure that neither the social nor the cultural context of those phenomena is neglected. To draw up a workable religio-phenomenological model, in general, presupposes historical, ecological, and sociological analysis within a relatively homogenous cultural area. Regional phenomenology of religion as practiced by Scandinavian and Finnish scholars has incorporated the methods of folkloristics into religious studies.

Sociology of religion is a branch of the study of religion that occupies a rather independent position; its methods and problems are much the same as those in general sociology. From the sociological viewpoint, religion is principally a group phenomenon that has been adopted by a limited, cohesive group. Sociologists examine religion as a social system that maintains certain ideas about what is sacred and what is not, as well as the norms and roles associated with sacred and secular phenomena and beings, together with regular patterns of behavior that recur at fixed intervals.

Psychology of religion, on the one hand, forms a sector of the wide field covered by modern psychology; on the other hand, it is a branch of the study of religion. Most of the methods employed today in the psychology of religion have been developed in other branches of psychology. Examples of these methods are

questionnaires together with accompanying interviews, laboratory experiments, psychoanalysis, and tests. A new trend is exemplified by questionnaires about people's attitudes and the use of autobiographical interviews. With a greater emphasis on empirical research methods, scholars within the psychological and sociological trends in the study of religion have labeled their discipline as the *scientific study of religion*.

Anthropology of religion is focused broadly on humankind in its problematic scope: Religion is viewed within the terms of the concepts and behavior of individuals and societies. This method is anthropological in the sense that it attempts to portray religion holistically, either as a part the cultural totality to which it belongs or as a part of the learned social tradition of man. The central problem concerns religious communication, that is, the transmission of religious tradition, the crucial object of the study being interactions between the individuals and societies. The religio-anthropological approach is also ecological, as it concerns itself with the interdependence between religions and the environments in which they exist. Such studies strive to eliminate changes resulting from contacts with other factors (acculturation) in order to arrive at an explanation of whether, for example, membership in a group engaged in a particular trade or occupation influences the way in which religion, religious tradition, and religious behavior are molded into a certain shape and, in the final analysis, the way in which a religious person's character is formed in a particular culture. Religio-anthropological study is based primarily on the materials collected in intensive fieldwork. The problems of the holistic study of culture, religious interaction systems, religious communication, and ecological questions make such great demands as regards the material under study that collecting in-depth in any field is central to religio-anthropological research.

Juha Pentikäinen

See Also Evolutionary Theory; Religion, Folk.

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Religion, Folk

Religion as it is believed, practiced, and experienced in everyday life. Many humanistic and social scientific disciplines have examined the kinds of religious belief and practice found among the common people and categorized them as *folk religion*. The discipline of folklore has employed this term to describe a variety of rural, urban, historical, and contemporary religious phenomena that are directly influenced by, develop alongside, and exist within “official,” institutional religious contexts and forms.

Folklorists continue to prefer *folk religion* as a term of choice to describe the religion of small, homogeneous communities of believers in place of *popular religion*, the religious expressions of the masses or religion transmitted by means of mass communication. Many other designations share a conceptual kinship with folk religion. Some of these expressions in English are: *popular religion*, *people's religion*, *practical religion*, *local religion*, *common religion*, *the religious life of the laity*, *domestic religion*, *extra-ecclesiastical religion*, *pragmatic religion*, *subterranean theologies and superstitions*, *nonofficial religion*, *lived religion*, and *actual religion*. Terms specifically used by folklore/folklife scholars are *superstition*, *unofficial religion*, *religious folklife*, *religious folklore*, *religious folk tradition*, *the folk church*, and *oral, traditional religion*.

Whatever confusion there is navigating the plethora of terms folklorists have used in their study of religion, they share one essential idea: that a concern for religion as it is manifested in everyday life is essential for a complete apprehension of human religiosity. This point is crucial because of the overemphasis of scholarly interest in the institutional dimensions of religious history, structure, laws, polity, community, education, texts, and architecture. Folk religion scholarship has examined, instead, religion expressed in individual and community systems of belief; speech, story, and song; private devotions and practices; public ritual activities; and the material culture of clothing, food, domestic space, religious objects, and the life of the body.

When folklorists study religion, they tend to see it as involving explicit references for people to conceptions of deities or the supernatural. Their eclectic study of religion has centered on complex societies and mainly emphasized Christian contexts. Conceptualizations of folklore and religion have been divided between the study of lore, that is, the oral (and sometimes behavioral and material) expressions concerning or emanating from a particular religious tradition,

Animism

Term derived from the Greek *anima*, meaning spirit or soul, and used to signify either: (1) the belief in indwelling spirits (souls, ghosts, and other invisible beings) inherent in people, animals, plants, or even lifeless things and often presented in personalized or anthropomorphized images, or (2) the theory that accounts for the origin of religion on the basis of this kind of anima. The anima is believed to be like a soul, a self, or an ego, able to leave the body either temporarily (e.g., in sleep, ecstasy, or fright) or permanently (e.g., on the occasion of death).

The theory of animism as the basis of the earliest form of religion was set forth by the pioneer English anthropologist E. B. Tylor (1832–1917) in his book *Primitive Culture*. Tylor bridged the evolutionary and diffusionist theories of culture of his times in his own psychologically inspired reasoning. The general evolutionary perception of that age proposed a gradual development of the natural, social, and spiritual worlds toward more complex and higher modes of existence. In the evolution of man's religious ideas, monotheistic Christianity was placed at the pinnacle of the developmental scale as the highest form of spirituality.

Tylor stated that primitive religion was rational in its own way, supporting his premises with an image of the 'ancient savage philosophers.' The theory of animism was thought to reveal the psychological mechanisms of primitive man and the original form of religion in human history. However, Tylor's hypotheses were not based on reliable scientific data, and the premise of unilinear cultural evolution ultimately could not prevail in the face of accumulating evidence regarding early man. Scientific accumulation of knowledge on the so-called primitive religions and on continuous contacts between these tribes and peoples of different modes of production and belief systems forced scholars to abandon the theory that claimed that the nineteenth-century aboriginal tribes represented the pristine state of human cultural evolution.

Despite the fact that the theoretical value of animism has been disproved, it played an influential role in the study of man for decades before the rise of functionalism in the field of anthropology. It also made an important contribution to the search for the origins of human civilization.

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and the study of the folk (a group of religious people). This can be called "religious folklore." Folk religion also has represented for folklorists a specific group of religious people, such as "the folk church," which stands independent of a culture's normative religious communities or organizations. Finally, "folk religion" has been conceived as the entire body of interpreted and negotiated religious beliefs and practices of individuals and communities fluidly interacting with organized religious traditions. The diverse subjects examined have included the collection and analysis of Christian saints' legends; supernatural narratives from

Mormon Utah; American regional spirituals; witch tales from eastern Pennsylvania counties; popular beliefs concerning the cycles of human life, luck, magic, and the supernatural given the pejorative designation “superstitions”; and the cultural continuities categorized as survivals of distinct ethnic and linguistic regions and peoples, such as the ancient Celts, Germans, Mediterranean peoples, Eastern Europeans, Middle Eastern and Far Eastern communities, Africans, and Native Americans. The breadth of folkloristic interests in religion is shown in the range of other historical and contemporary work, such as the study of Bavarian pilgrimage devotionism and its associated material culture of medals and badges; French, French Canadian, and German holy cards and other religious prints; Holy Week processions of southern Italians; Swedish Lutheran peasants’ use of the Bible; devotion in Newfoundland to particular Roman Catholic saints; healing narratives associated with a European or American saint’s shrine; the use of talismans in Greek American culture; New England tombstone designs; oral expression of Pentecostal women in Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri; speech, chant, and song in an Appalachian Independent Baptist congregation; voodoo and other African Caribbean syncretized forms of belief; urban and rural Italian and Italian American home altars and street and lawn shrines; apparitions of holy persons in Europe and the Americas; contemporary Wicca and goddess religion in England and the United States; and the negotiated beliefs of gay and lesbian urban Roman Catholics.

Folklorists have studied religion and religious material in a number of ways. The earliest research into folk religion was accomplished by German folklife scholars, and it was the Lutheran minister Paul Drews who coined the term *religiöse Volkskunde* in 1901 to prepare young seminary graduates for the radically different religious ideas of their rural congregants. Throughout the twentieth century, German, Austrian, Swiss, and Swedish folklife scholars (Georg Schreiber, Wolfgang Brückner, Richard Weiss, and Hilding Pleijel among them) studied the religious customs of Roman Catholic and Protestant peasant and rural (and gradually urban) populations continuing Drews’s dichotomous conception of folk religion as the religious elaborations of the faithful juxtaposed to the religion of self-designated official institutions and their functionaries. Other European regional ethnologists, such as southern Italian scholars influenced by Antonio Gramsci (e.g., Ernesto De Martino and Luigi Lombardi-Satriani) became especially interested in the autonomous devotions of the dominated classes, which they interpreted as a means of cultural and political resistance. Gradually throughout the century, archives and museums were established in Europe for the preservation, study, and display of the oral, literary, and material evidence of the people’s traditional religious beliefs.

The American folklife scholar Don Yoder adapted the European approach to the study of the religion of folk cultures in the context of North America. His



A Haitian woman is possessed by spirits while dancing during a Vodou ceremony in Soukri, Haiti. (AP/Wide World Photos)

influential 1974 definition conceptualized folk religion as unorganized religion that is both related to and in tension with the organized religious systems in a complex society. It was, for him, the totality of people's religious views and practices existing apart from and alongside normative religious theological and liturgical forms. Yoder, therefore, conceived of folk religion primarily as unofficial religion. In this regard, his definition remains closely aligned to the official church-centered orientation of European scholarship. Yoder's two-tiered dichotomization of unofficial folk religion and official institutional religion pervades the scholarly description, conceptualization, and analysis of religion by American folklorists who emphasize folk religion's dependent, residual qualities in relation to formal cultural institutions.

When folklorists such as Yoder discuss folk religion or religious folklore appearing in the context of a religious folk group, the implication is that religion somewhere exists as a pure element that is in some way transformed, even contaminated, by its exposure to human communities. This tendency is emblematic of how folklorists consistently have devalued folk religion by assigning it unofficial religious status. Religious belief should be viewed as the integrated ideas and

Manism

Belief in the deification of deceased ancestors or the hypothesis that ancestor worship is a primary source of religion. The term *manism* is derived from the Latin *manes*, meaning ‘departed spirits, ghosts, souls of the deceased.’ The concept implies both the practice of worshipping deceased ancestors and the theoretical orientation that suggested this worship was the origin of religion. According to this hypothesis, ghosts developed into gods, with remote and important deceased ancestors becoming divinities and their offering places developing into the shrines for ritual propitiation.

As a belief in a continual relationship between the spirits of the deceased and the community of the living, manism was thought, during the nineteenth century, to have characterized the primal forms of religion, the religion still to be found among ‘the primitives.’ According to the British philosopher Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), manism offered a sort of rational explanation for otherwise mysterious or inexplicable events and phenomena. The unilineal scheme of evolution had become a dominant theory by Spencer’s time, a time of increasing interest in the comparative study of mankind and its religions. His theory of religion was both psychological and evolutionary in its style. Spencer, who was the first to advocate the theory of manism, claimed that ancestor worship was the root of every religion, and he hoped that knowing the origin of religion would reveal the later developments in its unilineal evolution. He further believed that the idea that worship of ancestors or ghosts gradually developed into the belief in gods clarified the general direction of cultural evolution. However, as an explanation for the origins of religion, manism never enjoyed great popularity, not even during Spencer’s lifetime.

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practices of individuals living in human society. It is this elemental aspect of the interface of individual religiosity and folklore that can never be categorized into a genre or identified primarily because of group affiliation or regional association. Indeed, though this would seem to be a major concern of the scholar of religion and folklore, it, in fact, has been the least examined element.

Yoder’s approach to studying folk religion as religion instead of as oral genres or lore of religious people represented an attempt to break the practice of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century folklorists who were more interested in collecting and cataloging religious, magical, occult, fantastic, medical, or fatalistic beliefs as examples of “superstitions.” Such beliefs were not studied and analyzed with an eye to their cultural context or their place within the fabric of community or individual lives but were bracketed as cultural aberrations. Folk religion is an item-centered, as opposed to context-centered, orientation more interested in the transmission and variation of oral forms than in the constitution or influence of systems of belief. Folklorist Wayland D. Hand was the chief

American exponent of this approach throughout much of the twentieth century. His insight was to collect, preserve, geographically classify, and annotate such material, but these “popular beliefs” were given little ethnographic contextualization. Some contemporary folklorists studying religion still depend on a religious folklore approach to center their study of religion, and even ethnographically based studies of religious communities emphasize the oral components of religious culture (testimony, preaching style, song, life story) as a foundation for analysis.

It was Yoder’s student David J. Hufford, who, in reaction to such sources as the work on memorates by the Finnish folklorist Lauri Honko, expanded the folkloristic approach to narratives concerning supernatural experience by studying the relationship of such experiences to belief. Employing what he has termed the *experience-centered approach*, Hufford worked to establish the integrity of the connection between beliefs and lived experiences. At first emphasizing health belief contexts and then expanding into work on the epistemology of the supernatural, Hufford noted the importance of systems of belief as the foundation both for the variety of expressions of belief and the subsequent variety of healing contexts that individuals consider valid. In the context of folk medicine, Hufford focused on the systematic, dynamic, logical, and coherent qualities of folk medical traditions and individual health beliefs. Such systems are in a constant state of tension and negotiation with other culturally related health systems, such as allopathic Western medicine. He suggested an approach for understanding such beliefs that centers on the believers themselves, the variety of their life experiences, and the general capacity for variation as individual systems of belief incorporate and integrate other systems. In the case of religion or, more specifically, religious healing, Hufford recognized the same dynamism and the same tensions as he saw in other health systems. His conceptions of folk religion and folk medicine share such similar qualities as a reliance on oral tradition, regional variation, group identification, and the unofficial status of particular systems or beliefs in relationship to an official, normative tradition.

Influenced by the work of Hufford, the more specific study of folk religion within contemporary folkloristics should now be classified under the rubric of *belief studies*, which also includes such categories as medical and political belief. Belief itself can be defined as the confidence of individuals and communities of individuals in the truth or existence of something not immediately susceptible to rigorous empirical proof. A belief system is the combination of thoughts, opinions, or convictions held by an individual or group of individuals about a particular topic or topics. Individuals hold belief systems and express them in personal and communal manifestations. Furthermore, several systems of medical, political, religious, and other types of belief can coexist within the same individual, with individuals often mixing such systems. It is within this context of studying

systems of religious belief that folklore and folklife today encounter the innumerable and wondrous variations of human religiosity.

Folklorists have left a considerable amount of potential religiosity out of consideration if all religion need be traditional, inherited, group-oriented, deliberate, and involved in performative verbal art to be considered folk religion. Surely, in an effort to study such religion in the context of holistic systems, folkloristic attention needs to be focused not only on the products of religious lives but also on their processes. It is, of course, well within the domain of folklore and folklife scholars to be concerned with the creative products of religious lives, and, indeed, this is a major contribution of the discipline to the study of religious culture. Manifestations of religious ideas and practices should not only be studied as products (e.g., narratives with a religious theme or about a religious context) and performance genres (e.g., the study of the verbal art of conversion testimonies).

The notion of folklore as expressive culture is a concept often espoused by folklorists but not explicitly defined within the discipline's literature. Folklorists usually study belief as expressive culture, through its contextual manifestations (oral, material, aural, ritual, kinesic, or proxemic). The entirety of expressive culture, however, is not to be found merely in its manifestations or outward phenomena but also in the holistic study of these products of communication as dynamic processes within their attendant conscious, unconscious, aesthetic, and affective contexts. The actual human activity of believing something is itself a form of expression and self-communication before it is manifested into particular products. Thus, belief and the action of personally believing also should be considered as expressive culture, not immediately to be gentrified and studied as products. Through exhibiting a sensitivity to the integrity of the very act of believing by the individual, the term *expressive culture* can identify for scholars the internal processes as well as products of human religiosity, a notion that folklorists have pursued in the later half of the twentieth century under the rubric of performance theory.

A potentially useful new term that focuses upon the process of belief and the believing individual is *vernacular religion*, which may serve as a methodological tool for studying the conjunction of religious, folklore, and folklife studies. Vernacular religion is, by definition, religion as it is lived: as human beings encounter, understand, interpret, and practice it. Since religion inherently involves interpretation, it is impossible for the religion of an individual not to be vernacular. Vernacular religious theory involves an interdisciplinary approach to the study of the religious lives of individuals, with special attention to the complex process of acquisition and formation of beliefs that is always accomplished by the conscious and unconscious negotiations of and between believers; to the verbal, behavioral, and material expressions of religious belief; and to the ultimate object of religious belief.

It is relatively easy for the folklorist to understand the vernacular nature of the religion of the common people. It is less easy for folklorists, as well as other scholars of religion, to grasp the vernacular nature of the institutionalized elements of organized religion: their clerical functionaries, their oral and written statements, and their ritualized or sacramental occasions and observances. A vernacular religious viewpoint shows that designations of institutionalized religion as official are inaccurate. What scholars have referred to as official religion does not, in fact, exist. The use of the term *official religion* as a pedagogical tool has helped explain scholarly perspectives to the uninitiated, but it remains an inadequate explanation for the nature of religion. Although it may be possible to refer to various components within a religious body as emically official, meaning authoritative when used by empowered members within that religious tradition, such a designation when used by scholars is limited by the assumption that religion is synonymous with institutional or hierarchical authority.

“Official religion” as a Western scholarly concept has been sustained partly out of deference to the historical and cultural hegemony of Christianity, which has set the dominant tone for Western culture. Through a process of reification, “institution” has become equated for both believers and scholars, whether lay or clerical, with Church/church, with valid, and with official. Religion as institution has been mistakenly identified as the religious reality itself and not as an ideal type. We must be aware that this process of reification has taken place when we consider the concretization of the human religious impulse. There are bodies and agencies of normative, prescriptive religion, but there is no objective existence of practice that expresses official religion. No one—no special religious elite or member of an institutional hierarchy, not even the pope in Rome—lives an “officially” religious life in a pure, unadulterated form. The members of such hierarchies themselves are believing and practicing vernacularly, even while representing the most institutionally normative aspects of their religious traditions. There is always some passive accommodation, some intriguing survival, some active creation, some dissenting impulse, or some reflection on lived experience that influences how these individuals direct their religious lives.

Scholars have studied and continue to study institutional religion as official religion, maintaining it as the standard against which the varieties of people’s religious impulses are measured. To continue to compare the vernacular religious ideas of people of any culture to the construct “official religion” is to perpetuate the value judgment that people’s ideas and practices, because they do not represent the refined statements of a religious institution, are indeed unofficial and fringe. This attitude is particularly faulty because it is believers’ ideas that inspire the formation of institutional religion in the first place. Vernacular religion takes into consideration the individual convictions of official religious membership among common believers, as well as the vernacular religious ideas

at the root of the institution itself. In such a situation, the concept of vernacular religion can highlight the creative interpretations present in even the most ardent, devout, and accepting religious life, while also being sensitive to the context of power that makes the validity of “official” religion so convincing. The possible evolution of the folkloristic study of religion would be the adoption of this new terminology in lieu of the term *folk religion* and the dichotomous conceptualizations that it has carried with it.

Leonard Norman Primiano

See Also Belief, Folk; Belief Tale; Divination; Magic; Medicine, Folk; Religion, Comparative; Supernatural/Supranormal.

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Religious Folk Heroes

This large category includes heroes of all kinds: founders of faiths, martyrs, saints, the pious, the brave, the compassionate, and the wise. The religious traditions of most cultures and peoples, whether written or oral, are full of heroic stories, many of which appear as discrete narratives in other cultures, usually disassociated from their religious significance. The Christian Bible, notably the Old Testament, the Koran, the Torah, and many other such holy books are vast repositories of folk heroism. As is well known, many of these works share common characters and incidents, even though these may be interpreted in different ways according to the various belief systems in which they appear. In addition to such authorized works, there usually exist considerable bodies of apocryphal material that contain even more lore.

Religious belief is a fertile ground for the creation of folk heroes. Those who are celebrated may be founders of their religions (Nanak Chand, founder of

Sikhism; Jesus of Nazareth, founder of Christianity), helpers of the founder (Mary, the Apostles), or those who are martyred to its creed—a large group in all religious systems—or any combination of these. Frequently such individuals, real and mythic, receive the official approbation of their belief system, sainthood in one form or another. Around many such figures form folk traditions, beliefs, and customs that in the case of the major religions have become the foundations of complex social and cultural systems. In the generally more humble realms of the folkloric, religious heroes are celebrated in down-to-earth ways, with the stories of their deeds often being humorous, ridiculous, or even irreverent. Tales told of many Jewish holy men, for example, often emphasize their shortcomings as well as their virtues.

The spread of some religious belief systems, especially Christianity, around the world has led many religious figures to take on folkloric roles in different cultures. St. George is one such example, while Saint James, known as Santiago, is the patron saint of Spain and also identified by some South American Indian groups who experienced Spanish colonization as the thunder god. In the New World, the legendary doings of saints are told among immigrant groups and their descendants, in part as a means of continuing their links with the homeland where the stories are located. Other groups, such as Mexicans of Spanish descent, locate the traditions of their saints and holy people in the New World itself. Such legends tend to concentrate on the spiritual or supernatural powers of the saint or



Woodcut depicting the legend of Santiago (St. James), which tells of the saint appearing to Christian troops during their battle with Muslim forces, 1503. (Library of Congress)

holy man. One example given by Dorson is the south Texas folk healer Pedro Jaramillo of Los Olmos, celebrated as a miraculous healer among Mexican families from the 1880s. Stories of Jaramillo emphasize his magical ability to effect cures, often involving prescribed actions being performed nine times.

Christian religious figures often have a role in folk drama, especially in Latin cultures. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, for example, are found in the Nativity and also in other forms of traditional theater. God is also featured in some traditions, often those of a humorous nature.

Religious heroes are frequently found in folklore as helpers, sometimes as healers, and generally combine their status as official figures of veneration with the unofficial tales and beliefs that are popularly held or told about them. Like most folk heroes, they straddle the boundaries between different, often oppositional, cultural spaces, in these cases between the spiritual and the mundane.

Graham Seal

See Also Culture Hero; Drama, Folk; Helpers, Folk; Religion, Comparative; Religion, Folk.

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Revenant

A home-wanderer, a deceased person believed to appear to the people of his or her own community after death. People usually express their encounters with revenants in memorates and legends. The existence of the belief in revenants is closely linked to the understanding of the notions of life and death in a community. Different systems of beliefs and their messages concerning death clearly establish grounds for human ethical expectations and the appropriate behavior and social roles of community members. In this perspective, the existence of revenants is interpretable as the result of an unfulfilled duty on the part of either the deceased or the community of the living: Either the deceased behaved in an unacceptable way during his or her life or the community of the living neglected or improperly conducted the necessary rites for the dead person, either during life or after death.

Ideas about death and the afterlife vary greatly, according to culture and area, as do the ceremonies associated with the dead. There are communities, for instance, whose religious behavior is characterized by the belief in reincarnation, when one's birth means a rebirth in a new body. Some religio-philosophical doctrines, however, regard reincarnation as a punishment, and attempts are made to avoid any afterlife. In many cultures, the cult of the dead is a central religious institution. The bonds between the family and its dead are not broken by death and burial; their collective interaction is believed to continue.

On the basis of Finnish and Scandinavian materials, revenants can be divided into two main groups: the guilty and the innocent. The former includes those dead people whose lingering is understood to be the punishment imposed on them for an offense committed during their lifetimes. By tradition, the necessity for such a punishment is stressed at the time of death or when the body is carried to the grave. Among the innocent dead, by contrast, we may count all those whose lingering is not explained as being a punishment for offenses committed during their lives. Among them, the following three groups are distinguished: (1) the solicitous, such as a mother who died in childbirth; a jealous or protective husband; a betrothed man or woman; a person who comes to look after his or her

relations, children, or property; a person who hid his or her money; or someone who left behind a task undone or a promise unfulfilled; (2) the avengers, for instance, people who were maltreated, bewitched, or murdered; slaughtered children; aborted fetuses; or unaccepted potential children; and (3) those dissatisfied with the manner of their burial, burial place, or the behavior of the mourners, for example, those negligently or wrongly shrouded, unburied, or buried in unconsecrated ground; those not buried as they wished; those mourned for excessively or not mourned at all; and those buried with incomplete body or belongings. Members of the third group also might be termed the “unprovided.” Ancestor worship has always been a central cult in the societies that hold beliefs in figures such as home-wanderers and revenants. The dead are conceived as guardians of morals, arbiters of behavior, and supporters of an organized society. The dead who reveal themselves to the living people fulfill their obligations to proper norms.

Deceased children of Nordic tradition provide an illustrative example of revenants who interfere in the life of their community. This category of revenant—a wandering, placeless soul lacking a position or status in the twin community of the living and the dead—is in a permanent transition phase. The basic problem concerning the majority of the Nordic deceased children is that they have no status either among the living or the dead. These “supranormal dead children” may be divided into many categories, such as those murdered or abandoned, those who died before being baptized or given a name, those who were stillborn, those prematurely born, and so on. What is common to all of them is that they all died before the completion of the rites necessary for establishing their first status in the society. Their position is problematic, as they did not have time to join any living social group. A common means of signaling membership is naming. In fact, the name was the most important symbol of status long before the advent of Christianity, with its emphasis on the Christian baptismal rite as the entrance of a newborn child into legitimate status. So vital was the name that Icelandic sagas and Old Nordic provincial laws of the missionary period state that abandoning a child with a name was considered murder. If a child had not belonged to the community of the living, he or she could not be incorporated among the dead. Burial rites were either not performed at all or performed in a special way.

Juha Pentikäinen

See Also Belief, Folk; Religion, Folk; Vampire.

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Reversal

The common view that the spirit world is an opposite version of the phenomenal world, in both form and function. In the spirit world of the Hopi, “everything is the other way around, just the opposite.” According to Mircea Eliade, “The peoples of North Asia conceive the otherworld as an inverted image of this world. Everything takes place as it does here, but in reverse. When it is day on earth, it is night in the beyond (this is why festivals of the dead are held after sunset; that is when they wake and begin their day); the summer of the living corresponds to winter in the land of the dead; a scarcity of game or fish on earth means that it is plentiful in the otherworld.” The dead may be buried face down (a reversal of the sleeping position of the living), so as to ensure their passage to the other world, or their clothing may be put on (or, in ancient Egypt, be put into the tomb) inside out. Clothing also may be reversed to undo the effects of the evil eye. Since the spirit world is frequently consulted by means of reflecting surfaces—mirrors, water, oil, crystal balls—it is likely that the phenomenon of mirror image brings this conception into being.

The reversed quality of the spirit world reveals itself not only in actions but also in the distinction between left and right. Perhaps because most people are right-handed (but their reflection is left-handed), the left is taken to be the side of the spirits, and left-handed people are often viewed with suspicion. In Henri Boguet’s sixteenth-century account, the werewolf was said to eat only from the left side of the children it killed. In Paleolithic impressions of the human hand, according to G. Rachel Levy, “the negative impressions, produced by painting or blowing colour on to the rock surface round the flattened member, are generally of the left hand; the positive records of the paint-covered palm and fingers are chiefly of the right.” The plastic *mani cornute*, or horned hands, which are worn to ward off the evil eye, always represent the left hand. It is easy to see why the left is associated with awkwardness, as is suggested by such words as the French (and English) *gauche*, German *linkisch*, and Norwegian *keitet*. Most people are right-handed and less “adroit” with their left. But because of its association with the spirit world, the left also has a spooky quality, as is suggested by the Latin word for “left” that has given us *sinister* in English. Latin *scaevus* means “left, awkward, unlucky,” as does Greek *skaiós*. In Hungarian, the word for “left” is *bal*. *Balfogás* is “blunder” or “mistake,” but *baljóslatúis* “ill-omened” or “ominous.”

The distinction between right and left shows up in a great deal of folklore. Traditionally in Europe, people were enjoined to get out of the right side of the bed in the morning, rather than the left. But the word *right*, since it is associated with the human world rather than the world of the spirits, has come to have the meaning of “correct,” so that it is opposed not just to *left* but also to *wrong*, and nowadays one hears the remark, when someone shows ill temper, that he or she must have “gotten out of the wrong side of the bed.”

Relics of this sort of reversal are still common, as when one wishes an actor well by telling him or her to break a leg. In *Popular Beliefs and Superstitions*, an informant from Ohio says, “You should always say, ‘I hope you break a leg.’ If you wish them good luck, it means bad luck for them.” That is, the spirits may respond with a reversal of the outcome that is appealed for. Thus, there is a common belief that it is unwise to praise anything good or valuable, as such praise is apt to spoil it. Such a custom as *couvade* (in which a father-to-be may dress in women’s clothing and feign birthing) is probably to be understood in terms of this reversal of the spirit world, and this may be true also of the transvestitism sometimes practiced by shamans.

Paul Barber

See Also Belief, Folk; Shamanism.

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Revitalization

A deliberate attempt by some members of a society to construct a more satisfactory culture by the rapid acceptance of a pattern of multiple innovations. Sociologically, individuals and groups withdraw to escape when primary ties of culture, social relationships, and activities are broken and force is imposed. But when value systems get out of step with existing reality, a condition of cultural crisis is likely to build up, which may breed some form of reactive movement. A drastic solution is attempted when a group’s anxiety and frustration have become so intense that the only way to reduce the stress is to overturn the entire social system and replace it with a new one. Not all suppressed, conquered, or colonized people eventually rebel against established authority, although when they do, resistance may take one of several forms, which are varieties of revitalization movements.

A culture may seek to speed up the acculturation process in order to share more fully in the supposed benefits of the dominant cultures. Melanesian cargo cults of the post-World War II era have generally been of this sort, although earlier ones stressed a revival of traditional ways. Movements that try to reconstitute a destroyed but not forgotten way of life are known as nativistic or revivalistic movements. In such cases, it is commonly expressive culture (i.e., folklore) that is revived most easily to represent traditional lifeways, and narratives such as myth and folk history are commonly used as the means of characterizing and advocating the "golden age" that is to be revived. The Native American Ghost Dance religion of the Paiute prophet Wovoka demonstrates these principles.

A movement that attempts to resurrect a suppressed pariah group, which has long suffered in an inferior social standing and which has its own special subcultural ideology, is referred to as "millenarian"; perhaps the most familiar examples are prophetic Judaism and early Christianity.

If the aim of the movement is directed primarily at the ideological system and the attendant social structure of a cultural system from within, it is called revolutionary. As an example, revitalization movements have been common in the history of the United States whenever significant segments of the population have found their conditions in life to be at odds with the values of the "American Dream."

The revitalization sequence follows a predictable pattern. First, there is the normal stage of society, in which stress is not too great and there are sufficient cultural means of satisfying needs. Second, under domination by a more powerful group or under severe economic depression, stress and frustration will be steadily amplified to create a period of increased individual stress. Third, if there are no significant adaptive changes, a period of cultural distortion follows, in which stress becomes so chronic that socially approved methods of releasing tension begin to break down. Fourth and finally, the steady deterioration is checked by a period of revitalization, during which a dynamic cult or religious movement grips a sizable proportion of the population. Characteristically, the movement will be so out of touch with reality that it is doomed to failure from the beginning. Rarely, a movement may tap long-dormant adaptive forces underlying a culture, and a long-lasting religion may result, for example, Mormonism, Christianity, Islam, or Judaism.

Margaret Bruchez

See Also Religion, Folk; Revivals.

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Revivals

The conscious use of folklore *as* folklore to express or represent ideas about identity and/or art. The term *revivals* has been used most frequently to describe practitioners of folk music, storytellers, and craftspersons. Although sometimes it is a straightforward descriptive term for certain kinds of social movement, it frequently implies a judgment about authenticity.

An early appearance of *revival* in connection with folklore came in the writings of Cecil Sharp, who, in 1907, called for a revival of English folk music. Following his lead, the English Folk Dance and Song Society became the center of the social movement called “the first British folksong revival”—although the eighteenth-century English interest in the ballad also has been characterized retrospectively as a revival—and led indirectly to later twentieth-century folksong revivals in Britain and elsewhere. Sharp used *revival* metaphorically (its oldest sense) to describe the refurbishment of a repertoire or genre, as when we speak of the revival of a Shakespeare play or some other historical work of art. *Revival* also has been used as a metaphor for the awakening of religious spirit since at least the time of Cotton Mather. Folklorists are interested in religious revivalism as a social phenomenon with folkloric aspects, but they have viewed this area of inquiry as essentially different from that of secular revivalism and have generally treated it as an aspect of the folk-organized religion continuum.

By the 1960s, when folklore emerged as a professionalized discipline, folklorists read *revival* literally rather than metaphorically, and, having shifted their focus outward from cultural products to include cultural producers and contexts, they saw the word as referring to the resuscitation of “living” traditions in these new terms. Consequently, they employed it to describe the uses of insiders’ cultural products by outsiders—individuals from “other” cultural contexts. This perspective coincided with the apogee of the commercial folk music boom of the 1960s. *Revival* thus became a pejorative or judgmental term for folklorists, referring to the contextually inauthentic or spurious, and it was used, characteristically, to describe situations in which individuals or groups perform texts, enact customs, or create objects that are based on traditions from outside their own personal historical and/or cultural experience.

The concept of revival, whether literal or metaphorical, has been problematic to folklorists for another reason as well. Although folklorists typically have defined their materials as emerging from a matrix of “unselfconscious” cultural production or enactment, attempts to revive such materials imply some degree of “non-unselfconsciousness.” Those most interested in the revival of folklore tend to have, like Sharp, conscious (and articulated) political, artistic, or cultural agendas that extend far beyond the original contexts of production. Ironically, then—given their pejorative use of the term—folklorists have been among the principal folklore revivalists.

Folklorists, analyzing situations where differing degrees of awareness about such matters occur, create categories of classification that differentiate on the basis of awareness and agendas. Ellen Stekert speaks of four groups in the urban folksong movement: imitators (or emulators), utilizers, new aesthetic singers, and traditional singers, or those who “have learned their songs and their style of presentation from oral tradition as they grew up.” Joe Wilson and Lee Udall, addressing folk festival organizers and managers, present similar though more detailed categories. Separating performers into two categories, they distinguish those “reared in the culture from which the performed materials are drawn” from those “who adopt elements of style and materials from cultures into which they were not reared.” This allows them to split Stekert’s category of traditional singer three ways: traditional folk performer, aware traditional performer, and evolved traditional performer. These subdivisions allow for the idea that traditional performers might lose the unselfconscious quality in their performance. Wilson and Udall split their second category, nonreared, into subdivisions resembling Stekert’s other three.

Such categorization admits the possibility of non-unselfconsciousness, but it overlooks the frequent collaboration among the reared and the nonreared for conscious revival. Examples abound within the domain of music: Since the 1960s, for example, the growth of old-time fiddle music associations has been characterized by the participation of individuals who grew up hearing and performing fiddle music together with those who did not. They share a perception of this music culture as being threatened by outside forces and collaborate to protect and promote the tradition. In a more general way, collaboration between insiders and outsiders occurs whenever folklorists conduct research into a tradition.

Today, folklorists recognize the necessity and ethical imperative for dialogue with their informants in the process of research and publication. As scholars become aware and evolved in their attitudes about the traditions they study, so too do the tradition bearers. Consequently, the possibility of revival always exists whenever anyone identifies something as folklore.

Neil V. Rosenberg

See Also Authenticity; Fakelore; Folklorismus/Folklorism; Revitalization.

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Rhetorical Analysis

In its most general terms, the study of the relations between language and intention, especially the function of discourse in communicating ideas and shaping knowledge. Rhetoricians since Plato have placed emphasis on the speaker, the audience, the nature of the message, and the constitution of persuasive form. Each historical period has created its own configuration of primary rhetorical issues, such as the relation of rhetorical principles to pedagogy, treatment of the rhetorical processes of composition (that is, canons of invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery), and attention to either performance or text. Since the classical period, rhetoricians have remained committed to the following assumptions: (1) The rhetorician must have a command of conventional discourse forms and a complementary understanding of the contextual variables that define and constrain performance occasions; (2) although they recognize the conventional nature of language, rhetoricians have typically assumed that human nature could be defined in universal terms, thus allowing the rhetorician to predict how to create certain persuasive effects; (3) rhetoricians have promoted the study of rhetorical theory and practice as a pursuit that is fundamental to the development of intellectual skills and moral character; and (4) rhetoricians in every era have associated an education in rhetorical skills with the development of a literate citizenry.

Rhetorical analysis had its greatest impact on folklore scholarship of the second half of the twentieth century when Dell Hymes, Roger Abrahams, and others, adapting rhetorical principles of situations and strategies as outlined by Kenneth Burke, reconceptualized folklore as a study of performance. Abrahams saw Burke's concept of persuasion and performance as a means to integrate diverse approaches to the study of art. The introduction of the concept of performance provided an alternative to the text-centered perspective scholars had previously utilized; now, scholars considered questions of form and the relation between components as part of a larger performance context involving the relations between performer, text or object, and audience. With the influence of Burke's rhetorical approach to art as persuasive communication, folklore studies

was able to integrate literary, text-centered, historic-geographic studies with ethnographic, culturally contextualized studies.

Interestingly, two of the most provocative Burkean concepts, *consubstantiation* and *terministic screen*, have not been incorporated into folklore's rhetorical approach to performance. In *Grammar of Motives*, Burke described consubstantiality as a state in which persons feel themselves to be "substantially one." Burke argued that it is the aim of rhetoric to create this state through language acts in which the addressee identifies substantially with the speaker. In *Language as Symbolic Action*, Burke defined the very nature of language as a "screen" that defines reality as much through what is filtered out as what is filtered in. Language acts or rhetoric performs this function at the level of discourse. Folklorists have utilized similar concepts under the general heading of context without realizing the theoretical rapprochement between folklore performance theory and these other Burkean rhetorical principles.

Rhetoric and folklore are joined most meaningfully in performance studies in which communication is viewed in a cultural context. However, though rhetorical principles, especially principles of arrangement and style, are well suited to the close analysis of cultural performances, the field of rhetoric itself has more often made universal rather than culturally specific claims. Further, even though rhetoricians long have recognized communication to be a crafted, artistic construction rather than a decontextualized truth, the principles of construction have been assumed to be universal rather than locally situated and contested. Thus, one consequence of the appropriation of rhetorical principles in performance studies has been a challenge to the universalist claims made by rhetoricians.

Between the late 1960s and late 1980s, the performance model became established as a dominant paradigm of folklore research. During that period, the role of rhetorical studies lost some emphasis as folklore models turned increasingly to anthropological, structural, and sociolinguistic models of communicative performance. In the 1990s, as performance studies turned toward addressing the politics of culture and larger performance stages rather than face-to-face interaction in small groups, rhetoric and the politics of persuasion again became integral to folklore research. By this time, rhetorical studies too had also been influenced by poststructural and, to a lesser extent, ethnographic cultural approaches of the past decades. These influences have resulted in the articulation of the social constructionist approach to rhetoric, a position that argues that communities define the nature of rhetorical practices and also argues that interpretation replaces truth. However, the social constructionist approach to rhetoric maintains that the communal nature of rhetoric is knowable; therefore, codes of practice can still be defined and taught. One of the attractions of the social constructionist approach to rhetoric for folklore studies is that this position attempts to dismantle the rhetoric's historical allegiance to the promulgation of dominant discourses.

In addition to the value of traditional rhetorical principles such as speaker, message, and context to folklore performance analysis, the social constructionist approach to rhetoric holds particular promise for another point of intersection between rhetoric and folklore because this position recognizes the politics of culture. Whereas the historical bias toward high culture on the part of rhetoricians and the bias toward a limited concept of the folk as low culture on the part of folklorists separated the two fields for most of the twentieth century, both fields are currently investigating the substance of those biases and are similarly committed to an ongoing exploration of the dynamics of language in use.

Nan Johnson and Amy Shuman

See Also Linguistic Approach; Performance.

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Riddle

The best-known and best-studied form of traditional enigma. The riddle is generally agreed to consist of a description and its referent—the first posed by the riddler, the second guessed by the respondent. The enigma comes from the incorporation of a “block element” in the description: an ambiguity that prevents

the description from being obvious. The ambiguity may occur at any level of the linguistic code from the phonological to the semantic, and it is often presented as an opposition or paradox within the description (“What has eyes but cannot see?—A potato”).

The “true riddle,” as it is often called, relies on concrete, familiar objects in the culture, and it equates two things through the use of a metaphor. The implications of favorite metaphors are elaborated through numerous riddles in a given tradition. In Finnish riddles, for example, women are commonly compared to trees:

Rowan tree on a sacred hill, sacred leaves in the rowan tree. (*Bride*)

A sacred rowan tree, on the edge of a sacred field, a sacred berry in the rowan tree.

(*Pregnant woman*)

A widow in the fall, a widow in the winter, a new bride in summer.

(*Deciduous tree*)

A thousand-year-old woman has a child every year. (*Pine tree with cones*)

The recurrence of metaphors makes it possible for riddles to be guessed by persons familiar with a given tradition, thus making the riddling session a true contest of wits. It also lets riddling make larger cultural assertions. The tree metaphor, for example, suggests that the focus of women’s lives around marriage and childbearing is as natural and inevitable as the life cycle of a tree. Other Finnish riddling metaphors further reinforce traditional gender roles by matching women to kitchen tools and men to farming tools.

Many scholars have claimed that the use of metaphor to bring different cultural domains together functions to establish higher-order similarities and thus to imply an overarching coherence and rightness to the culture. When correspondences are established between nature, humanity, and human-made objects, riddling can serve, as James Fernandez says, as a kind of “edification by puzzlement”—a way of leading members of a culture from the diversity of their experience to a sense of a higher integration. In certain traditions, this power of riddles is appropriated for religious purposes, and riddling becomes a means of initiation into cosmology.

However, riddles often seem to disturb the coherence of culture by pointing out anomalies in its categories—there are some eyes that cannot see. Thus, some riddles relativize rather than reinforce culture: Their messages have to do with the limits of any system attempting to impose order on experience. Respondents are led to question the cultural taxonomies they have so painstakingly acquired and to investigate situations empirically.

John McDowell has suggested that these two functions of the riddle are not mutually exclusive but that they seem to prevail in different types of society. The “true” or metaphorical riddle flourishes in “traditional,” relatively small-scale,

and homogeneous societies, where the narrow range of material culture limits the universe of riddle referents and, more important, where a common system of beliefs and values can be taken for granted.

The riddles of paradox and anomaly belong to heterogeneous societies in which paradox and anomaly are likely to figure prominently in everyday experience. Riddle anomalies tend to occur at the level of language rather than in the world referred to: They are problems in the code (“What room can no one enter?—A mushroom”). Indeed, as W. J. Pepicello and Thomas A. Green suggest, the real referent of contemporary riddles is the linguistic code itself. And the question of code is perhaps the real challenge of contemporary culture; before any debate on the nature of reality can take place, a common language has to be established. The presence of conflicting cultural codes may enter riddling directly. In one session, a Chicano child asked the Anglo folklorist John McDowell, “Why do you need a moustache?—So you won’t be a *bolillo* [white].”

Generalizing broadly, then, members of traditional societies use riddles to propound their culture’s rules and to integrate these rules into a larger synthesis. In complex societies, in which riddling is generally limited to children, riddling teaches the importance of message form and the particular context. The analytical skills and cognitive flexibility learned in riddling prepare children for the pitfalls inherent in reading contemporary messages.

Dorothy Noyes

See Also Enigma, Folk.

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Riddle Joke

A joke in the form of a traditional enigma. Although the riddle joke is couched as a question, the respondent is not expected to arrive at a solution; rather, the poser follows up with the answer after a short pause.

Riddle jokes often circulate in cycles relating to a current event, such as the 1986 explosion of the U.S. space shuttle *Challenger*, the 1986 meltdown at the Chernobyl nuclear plant in the Ukraine, a political campaign, or a celebrity scandal. Other foci of cycles include stigmatized social groups (such as Polish immigrants in the United States); powerful public figures (such as the hated Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu); an action frame (screwing in a light bulb); and such absurd or horrific *dramatis personae* as elephants and dead babies. The poser often tops one joke with another, and jokes build on the form of earlier jokes in a kind of dialogue. Such cycles circulate rapidly and enjoy wide popularity while the topic or the jokes themselves are current.

Riddle joke cycles address, whether openly or in symbolic disguise, matters that deeply trouble a society. Disasters and scandals undermine the claims of the established order to competence and integrity. Dominated populations, by their very existence and certainly by their movements to gain equal treatment, threaten the position of those already inside the structures of power. The anxieties of the privileged persist even when overt prejudice has been eschewed: Roger D. Abrahams and Alan Dundes, observing that the vogue of elephant jokes in the United States coincided with the rise of the civil rights movement, suggest that the images of elephant footprints in refrigerators or elephants in treetops expressed unconscious fear of African Americans “forgetting their place.” Finally, unsettling social change emerges in such cycles as the dead-baby jokes of the 1970s, apparently linked to the new visibility of divorce, contraception, and abortion in North America.

Children’s riddle joke cycles are particularly apt to test the margins of the speakable, as in the well-known “gross jokes.” Their covert circulation in classrooms and schoolyards challenges the world of euphemism and normative conduct constructed in children’s textbooks. In the same way, the much-condemned brutality of the *Challenger* jokes (“What was the last thing that went through Christa McAuliffe’s head?—Her ass”) is seen by Elliott Oring as a critique of the media’s banalization of disaster. He notes the jarring effect of commercial interruptions upon images of catastrophe and how the jokes play upon this juxtaposition by frequent use of advertising slogans and brand names. “Sick” or obscene jokes, then, restore the horror of the world suppressed in official discourse. Unprintable, they resist co-optation into that discourse.

The performance of riddle jokes is often buffered by disclaimers on both ends. The joke is presented as something heard recently, thus not originating with the poser; the poser may add further distance by disparagement (“I heard an awful one yesterday”). The respondent mitigates his or her laughter by exclamations of disgust or by apology (“I shouldn’t laugh, but it’s such a bad pun”).

The form of the riddle joke may ease the broaching of these delicate matters in conversation. Its brevity and tight construction (rendering it impersonal and

almost aphoristic) and its topicality (giving it the status of news) remove the burden of responsibility for its content from the poser. Moreover, the collaborative form of the riddle, which demands at least a ritual grunt of interest after the question is posed, implicates the respondent in the joke. Both parties have collaborated in allowing the unspeakable to be spoken.

The riddle joke is one of the most common joking forms today, and individual jokes are probably the most widely transmitted items of folklore in the contemporary United States. The same formal qualities that allow them to speak of controversial matters make them memorable and conducive to rapid transmission. Moreover, the focus on topics made general throughout a national population by the mass media allows jokes to be passed between comparative strangers. Although community-specific riddle joke cycles do exist, local background knowledge is unnecessary for the appreciation of most riddle jokes. Thus, riddle jokes are widely used as social icebreakers. Dealing with general issues, they can serve as a basis for broad consensus and become a means of testing the waters in the establishment of provisional solidarities between new acquaintances. The respondent's appreciation or disapproval of a joke is a measure of social and political affiliations—it indicates the respondent's willingness to form an alliance with the poser in the face of a putative Other.

Dorothy Noyes

See Also Enigma, Folk; Ethnic Folklore; Joke; Popular Culture.

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Ritual

A repeated socioreligious behavior; a chain of actions, rites, or ritual movements following a standard protocol. The important symbols and values of the people are used, provoked, communicated, or expressed in ritual. A ritual is easily observed in a community and is a major expressive form of any religion. Anthropologists and other students of culture have focused their attention on the description and interpretation of rituals to such a degree that it can be argued that many modern theories of religion are primarily theories of ritual. The meaning of a ritual entails more than merely the code of behavior it manifests. The predetermined

set of events is well known to the participants of the ritual, and there are certain conventionalized expectations concerning their behavior. Although very important symbols and central values of a group are evoked, it would be false to assume any direct link between the outward expressions and inner states of the participants in a ritual. In order to find a satisfactory definition of the term *ritual*, the participants' attitudes concerning the ceremony, social custom, and religious doctrine should be taken into consideration.

Ritual as a category of action is characterized by predictable structure over time, a structuring that is commonly labeled repetitive. In distinguishing ritual from other behavior, it is imperative to establish the difference between compulsive actions, private repetitive idiosyncrasies, and ritual per se. Ritual is separable from individual compulsive behavior by reference to the social dimension of the former.

Initiation

Rites formalizing the passage of an individual or group into a new social or religious status. Puberty rites, ceremonies that symbolize the transformation of youths into adults, are the most common form of initiation worldwide. However, formal ceremonies of initiation precede admission into communal organizations of all kinds, including priesthoods, military orders, schools, sodalities, secret societies, and clubs.



Aboriginal boy being painted for his important initiation and circumcision ceremony at Yathalamarra, Arnhem Land, Australia. (Penny Tweedie/Corbis)

The nature of initiation rites varies widely. Some are intensely public occasions distinguished by ritual scarification or circumcision. Others, especially if initiation entails the acquisition of secret or special knowledge, take place away from the public eye under remote or private circumstances. Extraordinary ordeals and rigorous group tests are commonly part of the initiation procedure if solidarity among initiates and the organization they are entering is a primary goal. Still other initiations merely signal the altered status of the initiates with unexceptional rituals little removed from ordinary social behavior. Among occupational groups, initiation may take the form of pranks in which the new person on a crew is made the butt of a work-related practical joke.

The French folklorist Arnold van Gennep (1873–1957) was the first to recognize that, despite specific differences in content, initiation rituals throughout the world tend to have similar, tripartite structures. According to him, such rites invariably consist of an initial phase that symbolically separates the initiates from their former status, a marginal or liminal period of transition, and a final phase of reincorporation with the group at the new status. Van Gennep also noted that initiation rituals share this tripartite form with weddings and funerals, two other key *rites de passage* that ritually symbolize and sanctify progressive transit through life and society.

D. Bruce Dickson

A ritual may be defined as a combination of the actions called rites (socioreligious ceremonies following specific traditional patterns), which, in their turn, may be divided into smaller ritual units in the structure of a ritual. In this definition, the conative (i.e., purposeful) level of religiosity comes to the fore. Rites commonly include both verbal and nonverbal communication. Religious concepts are displayed in the ceremony, and they are manifested not only in speech but also through kinesic channels.

The analysis of rites demands the analysis of both verbalized meanings and nonverbal elements in ritual behavior. Nonverbal does not mean, of course, noncognitive, although it may seem to be more difficult to get at the cognitive dimensions of the nonverbal acts of communication.

Rites commonly are divided into three categories: *crisis rites*, *calendrical rites*, and *rites of passage*. *Crisis rites* are understood to be occasional ritual acts, performed in order to remove some crisis phenomena, for example, a disease that torments the individual or community. These rites occur under unique circumstances and are attempts to organize the behavior of the community in such a manner that the crisis situation can be safely passed over and the normal order of life restored. Crisis rites include healing dramas. *Calendrical rites* are periodic, recurring, and form a clearly distinguishable group of their own. They include various ceremonies performed according to the time of the year or in conjunction

with the shifts in seasonal employment, such as rites for sowing and harvesting grain and ceremonies for opening a new year. The third group consists of *rites of passage*, rituals that are associated with different phases of human life such as birth, childhood, puberty, initiation or entry into adult status, engagement, marriage, maternal confinement, fatherhood, transfer into another social status, and death. Lauri Honko defines rites of passage as traditional ceremonies organized by the community through which the individual is transferred from one social status to another.

The focus of each of the types differs not only in terms of occasion but also in terms of the subjects of the rites. Rites of passage focus tightly on changes in the social position of the individual, whereas calendrical rites or ceremonies concerning changes in seasonal employment generally affect the entire community

Rites of Passage

A category of rituals or rites that accompany change of place, state, social status, and age. A human life cycle is marked by these passages from one social and physical position to another, in a pattern determined by the physiological and psychological maturation of an individual as well as the cultural socialization pattern and worldview of the community. Some of these transitions take place only once in an individual's life (e.g., birth, initiation, death), and some may occur repeatedly (transition from a profane role to the holy one as a specialist of the sacred).

This theory was set forth by anthropologist Arnold van Gennep in his influential book *The Rites of Passage*, published in 1909. Van Gennep was particularly interested in crossing territorial borders. According to him, all the rites of passage fall naturally into three phases: *rites of separation*, when the individual is removed from a previous status; *rites of transition*, when one is prepared to transfer to a new position; and *rites of incorporation*, when the individual takes on a new status role. In rites of passage, both the individual, as a ritual subject, and those present at the rites undergo a clear-cut change in their social relationships and, in this way, are afforded formal acceptance and recognition. The transfer does not take place suddenly but is a gradual process when the individual who is going through this stage takes on a temporary and intermediary role during the process of transition (e.g., the role of an initiate).

Van Gennep's basic model is structural. According to his definition, rites of passage accompany every change of place, state, social position, and age. In many traditional communities, these changes generally are made public, with their importance reinforced by specifically structured rites. First comes the stage of *separation* in which the individual is removed from a previous social position. This is followed by an interim period, *marge*, during which the individual is poised on the borderline between two positions (a previous status and a new one). The third and last phase is the full entry into the new status (*aggregation*). The impact that van Gennep's theory has had on the study of ritual and religions is wide ranging, having influenced scholars in a variety of disciplines.

Juha Pentikäinen

or occupational group. Another significant distinction involves the cycles of recurrence of the ritual types. Calendrical rites recur regularly in the life of the community, but most rites of passage take place only once in the life of an individual.

There are at least two important points of view on the nature of a ritual. The first perceives ritual as an important constituent of religion; the second views ritual as psychologically interpretable irrational behavior distinct from pragmatically oriented behavior. The former perspective is popular with anthropologists and historians of religion. From the latter, primarily psychoanalytic viewpoint, ritual is contrasted to science as a non-pragmatic and irrational action.

Nonetheless, it is always possible to consider a ritual in terms of “latent” social goals or the explicit religious meaning of ritual symbolism, bearing in mind that ritual acts do endow culturally important cosmological conceptions. The balanced view of ritual must encompass two polarities—the explicit and the implicit meanings of ritual.

Like any human activity, ritual is experienced through the human body as well as through the intellect. Ritual symbolism often is closely linked to intense sensory experiences and primary forms of bodily awareness, such as sexual or metabolic processes.



Newlyweds tour on boats during a traditional Chinese group wedding in the Shajiabang Scenic Spot in Changshu, east China's Jiangsu Province, 2008. The couples wear the traditional red. (AP/Wide World Photos)

Ritual is a repetitive action and can be participated in by generation after generation because it follows a restricted model. Yet it seems quite obvious that ritual responds to the overall situation in which it is performed and is not confined by a static, exclusive procedure without any adaptive potential. An interesting issue regarding traditional communication in rituals focuses on this adaptive potential. The fact that the overall quality of a ritual remains the same but simultaneously undergoes changes leads to the very center of different views on ritual and requires special attention.

When considering the adaptive qualities of ritual, it is possible to classify them in functional descriptive terms or analyze them in structural terms. The functional approach emphasizes the empirical and precise observation of ritual action; the structural approach centers on the underlying nature of rituals. The functional-enumerative approach, for example, is more a detailed description than a serious attempt at classification. By comparison, a structuralist analysis may attempt a classification of confirmatory and transformatory rituals in order to understand the changes that any particular ritual imposes on the structure maintenance or transformation of a given community. In this approach, ritual is understood as a goal-oriented and reactive

Transition Ritual

A category of ritual by which a symbolic threshold is crossed; a status-free period in which participants enter a betwixt and between state that is trespassed upon and left behind, and the status structure is set anew. Transition rituals are transformatory by nature. In the course of a transition ritual, the status of the participant is transformed to a new and ordered one. In that respect, a transition ritual might be viewed as a means of safeguarding culturally patterned structures and overcoming the difficulties of status changes and other periods of potential confusions. In the terminology suggested by Arnold van Gennep, transition rites are a subcategory of rites of passage. Crossing a threshold is a necessary minimal criterion for the definition of transition rites.

According to social anthropologist Victor W. Turner (1920–1983), a shift from a temporary liminal phase is accomplished by means of transition rituals. Using a symbolic approach, Turner attempts to identify the essential and primary attributes of a ritual as perceived by participants in that ritual. A transition rite can be conceived of as a process of transformation that, in Turner's opinion, could be compared to heating water to the boiling point or the change a pupa goes through to become a moth. Transitional rituals can take a variety of forms, including calendrical rites, consecration rituals and conversions, initiations (or confirmations), and funeral rites.

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activity that, under specific circumstances, either confirms or transforms the relationships and boundaries that prevail between the individual, community, and cosmos.

Various other areas of ritual research remain viable. The historical approach is mainly centered on the role that ritual plays in the process of transmitting the cultural and religious knowledge and symbols and in the formation of the identity and invention of the past of the society, community, or group. Related to the historical approach is the problem of the relation of myth to ritual; there is no universal pattern or consistent theory on the priority of either myth or ritual. A final group of approaches compares ritual actions and means of performance to the means and modes of dramatic actions.

Juha Pentikäinen

See Also Anthropology, Symbolic; Divination; Liminality; Magic; Medicine, Folk; Myth-Ritual Theory; Religion, Folk.

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British Railways poster showing Robin Hood in Sherwood Forest. Artwork by Frank Newbould, ca. 1950. (Getty Images)



Robin Hood

English outlaw hero and archer who first appears in Langland's *Piers Plowman* (ca. 1377). This source is not explicit on Robin's status as a robber of the rich, but by the first half of the following century, his persona as a noble robber and friend of the poor and oppressed is commonplace. The means of Robin Hood's early celebration are a number of early ballads and the major work known as *A Mery Geste of Robyn Hooode*. Although Robin is a commoner in these works (he is not elevated to the aristocracy until the seventeenth century), the world of the *Geste* is that of the rich and powerful. The Sheriff of Nottingham appears in his role of arch villain. There are knights, abbots, nobles, and notables, as well as the king himself. In the end, Robin helps the king and is received into his service. But after a while, Robin's nostalgia for the greenwood compel him to ask the king for permission to visit his old haunts again. The king grants him a week. Robin returns to the forest, rejoins his band, and his week's holiday extends to twenty-two years, during which time he refuses to accept the monarch's authority. Finally, he is betrayed to death by the prioress and Sir Roger. As given by F.

J. Child, the various versions of the *Geste* present Robin as a heroic figure and usually conclude unequivocally with the verse:

Cryst haue mercy on his soule,
That dyed on the rode!
For he was a good outlaw,
And dyde pore men moch god.

The *Geste* is a literary work of some sophistication, either compiled from existing ballads or using the same materials on which these ballads may have been based. The early ballads of the fifteenth century are certainly less literary (many perhaps being in oral circulation before their capture in print) and also tend to be more proletarian in orientation. While Robin has the scoundrelly but still relatively high-born Sheriff of Nottingham to outwit and corrupt members of the clergy to deal with, he also has encounters with commoners, as in “Robin Hood and the Potter.” Here the potter bests Robin, after which Robin symbolically exchanges clothes with him and, in this trickster disguise, goes off to Nottingham for further adventures with the sheriff and, as it turns out, his wife. This story is similar in some ways to the later “Robin Hood and the Pedlar,” in which a peddler defeats Robin and Little John in a fight and is incorporated into the “band of merry men.” In this ballad, Robin is still a leader of ordinary men, his heroic status dependent on his bravery, courteousness, fairness, and skill. The greenwood hero of the ballads and the *Geste*, then, despite his increasing aristocratic connections, is still quite a way removed from the eighteenth-century identification of Robin Hood as the “Earl of Huntingdon,” Robert Fitzooth, supposedly and conveniently descended from both Norman and Saxon forbears. This latter-day fabrication, derived from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century suggestions that the outlaw was a noble down on his luck, influenced much subsequent thinking about Robin as a wronged aristocrat.

Regardless of the historicity of Robin Hood, his folkloric image is that of the outlaw hero, and he is clearly viewed in such terms from an early period. The courteous archer in Lincoln green, the fabric he allegedly wore, is therefore the archetype against which all subsequent Anglophone outlaw heroes are measured. That this is so is made elegantly clear in Child’s account and editing of the Robin Hood ballads, where he presents evidence that these songs celebrating the real or mythical outlaw’s exploits were widely sung in England, and beyond, around 1400 and, given the *Piers Plowman* reference, almost certainly earlier. While, according to Child’s view, the later balladic treatments of this figure “debase” it in various ways, this “debasement” is in fact a sharpening and refining of the image of Robin Hood. Whereas he is certainly a friend of the poor in the *Geste*

and, presumably, in the earlier traditions, by the time of a seventeenth-century treatment titled “The True Tale of Robin Hood” (1632), he is a full-fledged outlaw hero and definitely a morally upright friend of the poor—“all poore men pray for him, / And wish he well might spede.” He helps distressed travelers on the road, assists widows and orphans, protects women, generally operates against the established power and corruption of the church, and robs the rich, particularly those who “did the poore oppresse.” He does not harm the humble workers nor any man “that him invaded not.” He is finally betrayed to death by “a faithlesse fryer.”

Much time and learned effort has been devoted to the study of this character—sometimes with the aim of discovering his true identity, sometimes with an interest in the more general mythic significance of the green archer. The conclusions of some research are that Robin remains a figure of uncertain historicity but is a cultural symbol of considerable potency in the English-speaking world. Dobson and Taylor’s revised and reissued *Rymes of Robin Hood* discusses Robin Hood place-names, linguistic terms, films, and other evidence of the enduring popularity of the outlaw, as well as a representative selection of mostly literary Robin Hood ballads. Stephen Knight has provided a comprehensive overview of this hero’s numerous roles in a variety of cultural forms, old and new. In a comprehensive and careful study, *Robin Hood: A Complete Study of the English Outlaw*, Knight traced the outlaw’s career in literature, film, and popular culture up to the present. He showed how the Robin Hood mythology has undergone changes related to social, economic, and ideological pressures. Robin’s original folkloric presence is in legends, place-names, proverbs, drama, and, presumably, ballads as a symbolic figure of resistance to authority and of communal solidarity. While these notions have persisted, they have been overlaid and extended by narrative treatments that variously gentrify, politicize, nationalize, and romanticize the hero. At first Robin Hood is a forest fugitive, a common figure in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In this guise, Robin is a shadowy opponent of authority and law. These resistant elements, consistent with the image of the outlaw hero, are developed and refined in the ballads of the fourteenth century and after, and also in the widespread Robin Hood plays and games first recorded in the early fifteenth century (at Exeter, 1426–1427). These performances were closely associated with the folk calendar and with traditional activities, including raising funds, sports, competitions, and other festive activities. Records of Robin Hood plays, and of official concern about them, increase throughout the 1500s. By around 1600, most of these plays had quietly faded away or been actively suppressed through a combination of growing Puritanism and civic alarm.

As well as proving his virility in past as well as present popular and high culture, Robin Hood has persisted to some extent in folksong. A few oral versions of Robin Hood ballads were retrieved by English folksong collector Alfred Williams early in the twentieth century and provide evidence, if in somewhat

fragmentary form, of the persistence of Robin Hood's image in British tradition. It seems from these partial texts, from Williams's observations on them, and from the age of their singers that Robin Hood may have been in decline as a central figure of rural English folksong by the early part of the twentieth century. As A. L. Lloyd pointed out in *Folksong in England*, only seven or so of the nearly forty Robin Hood ballads noted by Child in the 1880s had been collected in British oral tradition, and a further three in America. These ballads turn up in various states of completeness in the collections of the late and early nineteenth centuries, usually derived from nineteenth-century broadside versions, especially those printed by Such and Catnach. It seems fair to say from the available evidence that while Robin Hood retained a definite niche in oral tradition, he can hardly be said to be a major figure of British, American, or any other English-language folksong.

However, the catalogues of broadside printers of the 1830s show that Robin Hood lived on in printed ballads, and it is in media, literary, and artistic representations that Robin Hood is most alive today. Numerous film versions of Robin Hood continue a Hollywood tradition of regularly celebrating the English outlaw, a tradition dating from 1909 with the film *Robin Hood and His Merry Men* and involving well over thirty productions to date. The outlaw has also had an enduring career in the theater, in dramatic, comic, and musical forms, and in a still-remembered television series of the 1950s and 1960s. There are three tourist theme parks and recreations of the Robin Hood myth in and around Nottingham. Robin Hood remains the English-language archetype of the outlaw hero.

A substantial number of other folk heroes—though few heroines—are skilled with bow and arrow. William Tell is perhaps the best known of a number of heroes who shoot apples or other objects from the head of someone close to them, either a family member, close companion, or a lover. Other heroes carry out legendary feats involving bow and arrow, including the Russian Dunai Ivanovich and the Japanese Yuriwaka. Archers generally use their skills to avert catastrophe of some kind, as in the case of the Chinese Hou Yi and his Mongolian counterpart, Erkhii Mergen. Closely related to archers are spear-throwers, such as the Torres Strait Island hero, Kwoiam. The ability to use such missiles with skill and accuracy is not in itself heroic but, as with Robin Hood, forms a defining element of the archer hero's legendry.

Graham Seal

See Also Ballad; Folksong; Narrative; Hero/Heroine, Folk; Legend.

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Romantic Nationalism

A cultural movement combining the romantic focus on the primitive or the common man or woman and older literary forms with the advocacy of national and ethnic pride through the development of the literature, language, and traditions of the group. Romantic nationalism led to the collection and literary imitation of traditional art forms, and as a consequence, it gave impetus to the discipline of folklore during its formative stage.

Ideas of romanticism and romantic nationalism developed toward the end of the eighteenth century. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, this phenomenon already had become a large-scale movement that had deeply influenced ideas and ideals of individuality, creativity, and personal experience. Romantic trends also played a significant role in the development of nationalism and the concept of nation-state. The ideals of romantic nationalism inspired an interest in antiquity, ancient traditions, and folklore. The works of philosophers such as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, A. W. and Friedrich von Schelling, Friedrich von Schlegel, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau formed part of the necessary ideological background of romanticism. Among a number of emerging nations arose a need for re-creating or reconstructing indigenous mythical pasts, poetic landscapes, and golden ages, often for the purpose of supporting a case for nation-state status. Idealistic initiatives inspired an interest in folklore, and thus awoke wide-scale activity for collecting folklore materials in nineteenth-century Europe.

By 1765, Thomas Percy already had published a collection entitled *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. This work provided great impetus for the publishing

of subsequent collections in the eighteenth century. Another example of such publications is the pioneering collection of the folk poetry and literature of quite a range of peoples compiled by Johann Gottfried von Herder under the title *Stimmen der Völker in Lieder* (1778). Also, *The Poems of Ossian* (1765) by James Macpherson, purported to be translations of poems by the Gaelic poet Ossian, had an immense impact on the romantically inspired interests in folklore, despite the fact that the poems later appeared, for the most part, to have been composed by the author himself. Perhaps most significant to the discipline of folklore was Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's work of collecting and publishing folktales (*Kinder- und Hausmärchen* [Children's and household tales], 1812–1822), which served as an epoch-making impetus for the recording and publishing of folklore materials all over Europe. Their collection was a kind of blueprint, serving as one further model for other collections in the period of romantic nationalism and as a guide for selecting and editing such collections of literary-influenced fairy tales.

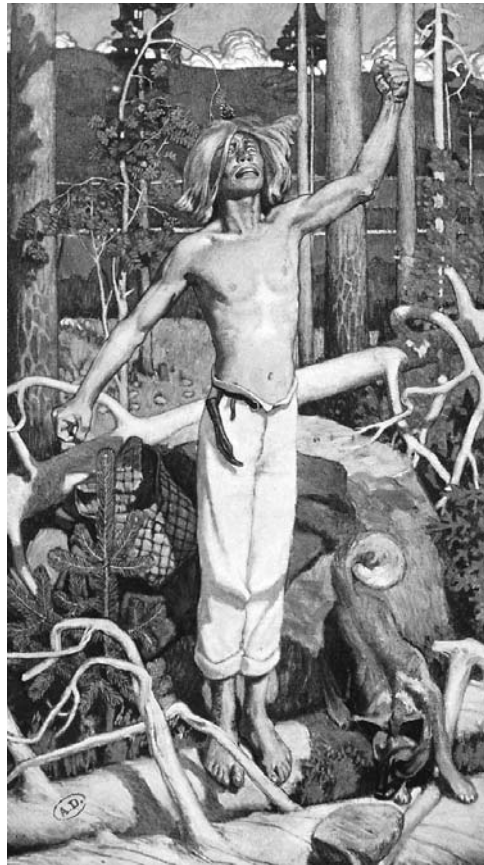
Interest in folklore has passed through similar stages among different nations regardless of the social system. The basic scheme of these stages could be simplified as follows: (1) idealistic initiative directed at interest in folklore, (2) wide-scale activation of collection, (3) development of forms of high culture based on traditional culture, and (4) establishment of applied traditional culture as part of cultural life.

There are abundant examples of Stage 2 in the large collections of folklore from the nineteenth century; the work of Krišjānis Barons, the compiler and publisher of close to 218,000 Latvian folksong texts in six volumes, *Latvju dainās* (1894–1915), is particularly worthy of note, as are Norwegian folktales by Peter Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Moe (1841) and collections of Russian *bylina* epics by P. N. Rybnikov (four volumes in 1861–1867) and A. F. Gil'ferding (1871). There are some 2 million lines of poetry in *Kalevala* (the Finnish national epic) meter in the archives of the Finnish Literature Society, collected mainly in the nineteenth century. About two-thirds have been published in the thirty-three-volume *Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot* (Ancient poems of the Finnish people) (1908–1948). In the years 1841, 1845, 1846, and 1862, a selection of Vuk Karadzic's collections, *Srpske narodne pjesme* (Serbian folksongs), were published as four volumes, comprising a total of 1,045 songs.

As a rule, only small selections of these and other important bodies of oral literature have been translated into other languages. These collections continue to have immense importance for folklore research—an importance that extends beyond the national level.

Romantic nationalism also provided inspiration for the creation of national epics. Romantic idealists held the epic as the very beginning of literature. Virgil's *Aeneid* had been the dominant epic model in the Middle Ages and during

The Anger of Kallervo, from *The Kalevala* edited and compiled by Elias Lönnrot (1802–1884) and published in Finland, 1908. Illustration by Akseli Valdemar Gallen-Kallela (1865–1931). (Archives Charmet/The Bridgeman Art Library International)



the Renaissance (serving as a model for *Paradise Lost* by John Milton). This was the case especially in western and southern Europe. German romanticism, however, took Homer's works as the primary pattern for the epos at the end of the eighteenth century. Examples following this model are the national epics of some Finnic and Baltic peoples. Elias Lönnrot compiled the Finnish national epic, *The Kalevala*, on the basis of folk poetry. The first edition appeared in 1835, the second and greatly enlarged edition in 1849. The Estonian counterpart of the Finnish *Kalevala* was the epic called *Kalevipoeg* (1857–1861), compiled by F. R. Kreutzwald. He used as building material local legends and tales of origin. Andrejs Pumpurs, the author of the Latvian national epos *Lācplesis* (Bear slayer; 1888), created his epic poem on the basis of Latvian etiological tales, folktales, local legends, wedding songs, and other items excerpted from folklore. *The Song of Hiawatha* (1855), by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, also follows a similar pattern of development.

In Germany, Wilhelm Jordan created the epic *Die Nibelunge* (The Nibelungs [a family name]), consisting of two parts: *Die Sigridsage* (The story of Sigrid; 1868)

and *Hildebrands Heimkehr* (1874). In his *Epische Briefe* (Epic epistle), Jordan declared that he was in fact “the German Homer,” a kind of embodiment or incarnation of an epic poet, matured in the right stage of development of the people.

A similar phenomenon, though one based within a different ideological framework, was characteristic of numerous ethnic minorities in the former Soviet Union. Romantic nationalism in its Soviet incarnation sprang originally from a statement emphasizing the creation of a high culture national in form, socialist in content, and international in spirit. Cultural life in many of the Soviet Union’s socialist republics was, for the most part, based on traditional forms. Many of the peoples in these areas did not previously have arts based on so-called modern civilization. The culture witnessed a merging of old forms and new contents. Cultural clubs and circles began to form, especially during the mid 1930s. At its inception, the program consisted of pure folk performances. Gradually, texts propagating the new system began to be devised according to the traditional schemes, and new melodies greatly reminiscent of folksongs were composed.

During the Soviet period, a great number of epics were published. Those compositions created on the basis of diverse versions of the *Köroglu* (*Korogly*, *Gurguli*) epics known, among others, to the Azers, Uzbeks, Turkmens, and Tajiks serve as examples. There are also epics based on a version by a particular singer. The Uzbek epics *Alpamyş* and *Rustamhan*, published on the basis of versions performed by Fazil Çoldas-oglı (F. Juldāšević), serve as examples. During the Soviet period, these and many other epics were subjected at times to censure and became the focus of ideological debate, but this is something that seems to be the fate of epics in general.

During the twentieth century, various manifestations of romantic and political nationalism have flourished in Asia, Africa, and South America. The role folklore has played in the cultural and social processes of these continents varies from preliminary efforts in collecting folklore items to diverse uses of folklore in cultural and national movements. Nationalism is unique to the specific contexts in which it develops, and the historical and political conditions under which it may arise are diverse. However, it may not be appropriate to use the term *nationalism* in an excessively wide range of contexts.

For numerous nations, folklore collections have been crucial for the creation of indigenous identity, cultural life, and fine arts; in some cases, collections have provided an impetus for the development of the written language. An interest in traditional culture characteristically has been stimulated by a romantic idealistic current represented by a nucleus group of cultural activists or some idealistic organization. The wide-scale collection and publication of folklore arising out of such stimuli has often been the last opportunity to record a nation’s vanishing cultural heritage. Generally speaking, the wide-scale activation of interest in folklore has emerged from a desire to reinforce the nation’s self-esteem and to

arouse respect for the nation's own language and culture. Wide-scale collection has been the starting point for the creation of archives and collections and for publications of folk material. It also has acted as a source for a mainstream in which literary epics and other literary products based on folklore are born and for pictorial, musical, and dramatic art drawing on traditional themes and elements. Arguments that the collection does not displace attention to the past but rather that the past is in service of the collection are contradicted by a broad knowledge of cultural history across national and historical contexts. In fact, folklore should be studied not only in "pristine" but also in applied forms.

According to some authors, the discipline of folklore arose partly from backward-looking or anti-modern perspectives. It is possible that the feeling of "over-civilization" in the West during the modernization period was in the air in the western regions of nineteenth-century Europe or the United States, but that was not the case in central, eastern, and northern regions of Europe.

The discipline of folklore arose in the period of romantic nationalism from an essentially modern perspective. It was the aspiration toward modernity in eastern and northern Europe that led intellectuals to promote broad interest in folklore, language, and heritage. Thus, toward the end of the nineteenth century, national awakening and social mobility—and, as a consequence, education in the native tongue—represented the road leading to modernity. Peoples without their history, language, and identity created national literature and literary language, discovered or re-created their roots in the past, and formed a compendium of (modern) national myths and symbols, including flags, anthems, and national festivities. Romantic nationalism has not only been able to resist the rational and secular force of modernity, it has also been part of the modernization process and complemented political, technical, and scientific development of the period. It was an inspiring force in the creation process of nations, especially among peoples struggling for independence in nineteenth-century Europe and also in countries striving for national unity.

It is true that, in many cases, nation-states are composed of more or less heterogeneous cultural, economic, linguistic, ethnic, or religious elements. Furthermore, it is necessary to keep in mind that the romantic movement developed and was manifested in many different ways, and nationalism has taken distinct phenotypes at different times and in diverse types of states. It is possible to make the distinction between *cultural nationalism*, aiming mainly at the creation of cultural identity through the use of folklore, art, music, literature, and *political nationalism*, striving for national identity through political movements and in times with uncompromising imperatives. In the nineteenth century, the most powerful ideological bases were the Herderian humanist cultural and national idealism and (especially toward the end of the century) the Hegelian doctrines of national spirit and its evolutionary power. The expansionist forms of political nationalism periodically rushed forward during the twentieth century with

different applications, the results of which are well known. Such forms of political nationalism seem to show up regularly, despite the fact that some scholars have thought that the impulse was already past its peak.

In our times, the resurrection or actualization of romantic nationalism, often based on ancient mythic and heroic figures and symbols, is, in many cases, a response to the decline of the modernist identity. In its entirety, the situation is very complex, with traditionalist, religious, and ethnic variations. But as we have witnessed, during this new era as well, national identity takes on many forms according to the political situation—from forms of peaceful rediscovery or creation of cultural identity to expansionist tendencies leading, in the worst cases, to situations wherein we can no longer speak about romantic but only about tragic nationalism. Romantic nationalism is not a homogeneous or unitary phenomenon, and all nationalistic uses of folklore materials are not necessarily romantic. The rhetoric of nationalism is based on diverse cultural, social, and political processes, and the role that folklore (and folklorists) plays in them is dependent on varying political aims and sociohistorical and sociocultural contexts.

Lauri Harvilahti

See Also Ethnic Folklore; Folklorismus/Folklorism; Literary Approach.

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Rumor

Unsecured information. People have a strong desire to make sense of the ambiguities of their world; certainty is a human goal. In this way, rumor serves as the cornerstone of epistemology. People make an “effort after meaning” and strive to explain uncertain or unknown events. Rumors frequently emerge in the aftermath of the breakdown of normal communication channels and become, in the words of sociologist Tamotsu Shibutani, “the cooperative improvisation of interpretations.”

Because of its centrality as a sense-making device, rumor has been examined from a wide spectrum of disciplines, including psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science, journalism, business, social work, law, and, of course, folklore. The classic definition of *rumor* proposed by Gordon Allport and Leo Postman is “a specific (or topical) proposition for belief, passed along from person to person, usually by word of mouth, without secure standards of evidence being present.” The key to the definition is the fact that the transmitter of rumors is not relying on secure standards of evidence, although what constitutes secure standards may be contested.

In the discipline of folklore, the study of rumor has been closely linked to that of contemporary legend, so much so that the lines between them are often blurred. In general, contemporary legends are traditional and have more complex narrative structures than rumor. A rumor is often a briefer and more evanescent communication than a contemporary legend. Yet there is considerable overlap between these two discursive genres.

The intensity of rumor has traditionally been expressed in the basic law of rumor, as proposed by Allport and Postman, which can be represented as follows: $R = i \times a$. That is, the amount of rumor in circulation varies with the importance of the subject matter multiplied by the ambiguity of the evidence. Despite the appeal of this equation, the data on the effects of ambiguity are generally stronger than the effects of importance per se. Some have argued that the critical ability of the listeners needs to be considered; those with lower critical ability are more likely to believe and spread rumor. As a result, rumor transmission may be linked to personality or emotional state.

Most rumors are brief, often no more than three related propositions. This is consistent with the processes of rumor memory and transmission: leveling, sharpening, and assimilation. In rumor transmission, most details of an original event are quickly forgotten (leveled). After most of the potential information has been lost, a rumor kernel remains, which is fairly stable. The second feature of rumor recall (sharpening) consists of the selective perception, retention, and reporting of a few details. Sharpening is the inverse of leveling: Sharpened details remain when others have been leveled. The extent of leveling and sharpening is a result of narrative content, the circumstances of transmission, and the

abilities of the narrator. The final component of recall, assimilation, refers to how details become altered as a consequence of personal interest, emotion, or prejudice. Rumors assimilated to prejudice include those spread in times of ethnic or racial tension in which one group alleges that another has committed a heinous atrocity—a ritual castration or some claim of blood libel. A cynical viciousness may not motivate these reconstructions; rather, the story is “better” (makes more psychological sense), from the prejudiced person’s viewpoint, with the hated group seen as the attacker. Assimilation assumes that memory operates through a process of “social constructiveness,” in which uncertain details are transformed into a compelling story.

One of the challenges for narrators who spread unverified information is to provide a textual frame by which the information can be interpreted without negative attributions made to the narrator. The fact that rumor often carries with it a moral attribution means that care needs to be taken so as not to be attacked for spreading false information. These opening frames can bolster the credibility of the remark (“I have it on good authority that . . .”), or, more often, can be used to distance oneself from the information (“I heard an interesting rumor that . . .”). Similarly, these framing markers can be placed in the middle of the report (“they say”) or at its conclusion (“What do you think about that?”). These markers cue the audience as to how they should treat the information to follow.

The discussion of rumor to this point assumes that there is common agreement on what constitutes unverified information. Actually, credibility is a social construction created by the parties to the rumor. How are narratives taken as true or false when they are presented as “truth claims”? The question that emerges centers around who has the authority to describe a claim as unsecured, unverified, and suspect. Although one might assert that there is “good” information and that there are “authoritative” voices, this only restates the problem. The choice of what constitutes an authoritative voice and good information is problematic and should not be taken for granted.

Obviously, characteristics of a source are important in our judgments of how to treat information. We judge narrators on remove, realm, and motive. Remove refers to how close the narrator is to the events being described or to trustworthy sources. In short, is the narrator in a “position to know,” or is he or she far removed from the events being described? Realm refers to the class of information being transmitted. Some realms of knowledge are considered legitimate, whereas other realms (extrasensory perception, unidentified flying objects [UFOs], and “miracles”) are considered by many to be suspect. Information in these zones of knowledge is barely considered, no matter the extent of the evidence. When considering motive, we ask if the narrator has some reason to shade information. The assumed motivation of a speaker influences how audiences will interpret the claims. The attribution of motivation will be a function of the

narrator's reputation as a credible source and of whether she or he has a clear interest in the topic and in our belief in the claims being put forward.

Truth is not handed to us; truth claims are. Our goal as an audience is to make reasonable judgments, while at the same time making the conversation flow as smoothly as possible. Rumor, being entertaining discourse, plays an important role in the free flow of communication.

Gary Alan Fine

See Also Gossip; Legend; Legend, Contemporary; Legend, Urban.

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S

Sacred

An ineffable, universal sense of ultimacy, holiness, and truth apprehended through experience. The phenomenologist of religion Mircea Eliade has written that the sacred is an element in the structure of human consciousness and not a stage in the history and development of that consciousness. This statement identifies differences in scholarly evaluations of the sacred in the discussion of its validity as an essential category within human culture. Folklorists who approach subjects related to the sacred—such as saints’ legends; narratives on healing miracles; beliefs about the protective power of verbal prayer or material objects such as Roman Catholic sacramentals, Jewish talismans, or the Bible; or the numinous quality of a natural environment or hallowed human habitation—do not wish to argue in support of the reality of the sacred as much as to present its existence as a widely considered possibility that invites rational discussion.

The sense of the sacred has, in the West, been strongly identified and associated with religion, either in religious institutions, in communities, or in the lives of believing individuals. The sacred has been used prominently in English as an adjective describing the unique status and distinctive power of an action, place, time, language, or aspect of material culture. The verbal, behavioral, and material systems of the sacred within religious belief encompass a variety of instruments and occasions of expressive culture that can be categorized under the rubric of visual or performed arts, public and private cultural performances, and individual acts.

As a theoretical subject area, the concept of the sacred has not been widely treated within folklore and folklife scholarship. However, ethnographic contexts and specific expressions of reverence for the sacred in traditional communities as well as in the individual lives of the common people have been of great interest to folklorists. Public display events and festivals, domestic and public architecture, foodways, costume, objects of devotion carried on the person or found in the home or place of work, and a multitude of individual and systematic beliefs and actions all manifest a relationship with the sacred that folklorists have studied at its cultural source.

The pioneering phenomenologist of religion Rudolf Otto, author of *Das Heilige* (1917; [The Idea of the Holy]), possessed a keen folkloristic sense of the expression of the sacred/holy in daily life. Otto focused on the instinctive feelings and responses in humans toward the mysterious and uncanny—terror and fear, fascination and

attraction. These feelings are engendered, he contended, by the presence of the holy or sacred, the *numen*, or numinous objects and signs that participate with or represent the holy. He claimed that the experience of the holy or sacred by people is itself the source that generates folktale, myth, saga, legend, supernatural belief, and memorate, sometimes by direct experience and sometimes because of the stimulation of the numen as the mysterious, which he called the *mysterium tremendum*. Otto felt that language actually fails to provide an adequate medium through which to describe the numinous experience. Working from the heritage established by Otto, folklorist David J. Hufford has made similar claims in his experience-centered approach to supernatural assault traditions. Hufford has carefully examined the language of belief, whether it be testimony, memorate, or other narrative structure, noting the individual's tendency to rely on simile and metaphor in an effort to provide an adequate description of a particular phenomenon.

Lauri Honko, Leea Virtanen, Hufford, Christine A. Cartwright, Gillian Bennett, and Diane E. Goldstein have contributed to the debate about academic traditions of belief and disbelief. This debate assumes that belief traditions involving feelings of the mysterious or supernatural grounded in awareness of the sacred are either true or arise from certain kinds of error. These folklorists have been especially interested in the analysis of the reasoned use of evidence within believers' narratives, and their testing of alternatives falls within the context of narration regarding supernatural experience. Another area of special interest in contemporary folkloristics is fieldwork within communities of believers who actively engage with the sacred as a serious and important part of their lives. This situation is especially challenging for folklorists who are themselves believers or who, though not believers, are nonetheless impacted by the strength of such beliefs due to their empathy with their informants.

Leonard Norman Primiano

See Also Belief, Folk; Religion, Folk; Supernatural/Supranormal.

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Sacrifice

Killing with a spiritual or religious motivation, usually, but not exclusively, accompanied by ritual and performed in a sacred place. Indeed, the term *sacrifice* is derived from a word meaning “to make sacred.” The practice of sacrifice follows no historical pattern in cultures—levels of incidence can remain fairly constant for long periods, or the use of sacrifice may wax and wane over time. Accounts of sacrifices include seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and nineteenth-century eyewitness reports by English officers in India, visitors to Africa, and Spanish chroniclers in Central America, as well as cryptic texts from the Mediterranean world and China.

The purposes of sacrifice include purification, renewal, atonement, and unification. According to Edward Westermarck, sacrifice may include burying the living with the dead to memorialize; burning or burying family members and slaves to accompany an individual in the afterlife; making offerings to ensure success in wars or to stave off epidemics of disease thought to be punishment from the gods, including the making of medicine from the bodies of sacrifice victims; and interring adults or children in the foundations of new buildings or under city gates and bridges as peace offerings and as a means of protection, springing from a fear of anything new or doing an act for the first time.

Sacrifice can involve one or many bodies or the body parts of both humans and animals. Human sacrifice, in its highest expression, is a voluntary act, undertaken

as a pledge for the common good, and suffering is often a preparation for the death.

Animals substitute for humans and for other animals as sacrificial victims regardless of the complexity of the civilization. Claude Lévi-Strauss insists that the choice of victim varies widely in accordance with what is available at the time. According to E. E. Evans-Pritchard's study of the Nuer religion, differences in substitutes are minimized. Romans, Greeks, Vikings, and Druids frequently offered humans and animals together on the same altar, to the same god, to obtain the same favors. And W. Robertson Smith has pointed out that human life is not viewed as more sacred than animal life in all contexts: For example, the eighteenth-century English would hang a man for stealing a sheep. Humans and beasts are leveled at the sacrificial altar when there is an unshakable belief in the blessings in store in the hereafter.

Sacrifice for purification purposes can be motivated by a fear of supernatural powers or by the desire to win favor or achieve a state of closer union with the god whose protection is sought. Or victim and sacrificer can join in seeking to bring about a better world as an act of hope. The rite can affect the sacrificer as much as the victim in the sense that the sacrificer is transformed as well and moved to a new sacred place.

Sacrifice for the purpose of renewal is inextricably linked to a belief that provisions will cease unless gods are propitiated. Fertility rites include sprinkling blood or burying pieces of human flesh in the fields before sowing to obtain a good harvest or ward off famine; making sacrifices to river gods for the necessary water; or sacrificing the firstborn, in the belief that if one child were given back to the gods, more would be provided.

The act in which one dies for the many is an act of atonement. In the hopes of saving their own lives, individuals may offer a human sacrifice as a method of life insurance—giving the one for the many, sacrificing an inferior individual to prevent the death of one more privileged, or offering one held personally responsible for a calamity.

H. Hubert and M. Mauss, French sociologists, contend that sacrifice is aimed at cementing the bonds between humans and gods in an act of communion through which the victim becomes an intermediary between the human and the divine. By means of the rite, the victim becomes part of the divine, and the sacrificer is brought into a state of union with the god.

Modern scholars accept varieties of these premises of purpose with a difference in emphasis or with a combined emphasis. According to René Girard, for instance, the main aim of sacrifice is to bring back social union and to restore the cosmic order. In the absence of a true judicial system to deal with violence, counterviolence is part of the divine order, in which case a scapegoat is found. Tension reduced, the crisis is resolved. Mircea Eliade proposes that blood sacrifices

replay the original act of creation and restore equilibrium by reenacting the original deed of violence, catering to the specific needs created by the deed.

Margaret Bruchez

See Also Myth-Ritual Theory; Ritual.

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Saga

A medieval narrative genre of northwest Europe. Although Mody Boatright extends the term to American frontier chronicles, most folklorists use *saga* to refer solely to texts from Scandinavia (principally Iceland) and Ireland. The medieval saga is a literary genre, but it drew on oral tradition and was performed aloud. Saga material sheds light on medieval life in Scandinavia and Ireland, helps clarify the development of other narrative genres in Europe (e.g., the romance, the *Märchen*, the ballad), and provides a fascinating case for researchers in orality and literacy.

Irish Sagas

The Irish saga tradition predated the Scandinavian. Latin biographies (*vitae*) concerning Irish saints appeared during the seventh century, and court poetry and prose writing began in the following century. As manuscripts deteriorated, scribes recopied them, often altering the narratives markedly. Since the earliest extant manuscripts date from the twelfth century, their textual history is a complex web of superimposed oral and literary influences.

The oldest prose material in the tradition, the mythological cycle, depicted Celtic mythology from an antiquarian perspective. Tales of the Tuatha Dé

Danann, an otherworld people associated with ancient burial mounds, predominated.

The term *saga* generally refers to the subsequent Ulster cycle, narratives produced in the eighth and ninth centuries. These focused on heroes of the province of Ulster (the *Ulaidh*) and their battles with the people of Connacht. The Ulaidh were led by King Conchobhar mac Neasa and his champion Cú Chulainn. The textual cornerstone of the cycle was the *Táin Bó Cuailnge* (The cattle raid of Cooley), a prose epic made up of a variety of tales. Important features of the cycle included its strong female characters, embedded poetry, and striking motifs.

The king cycle focused on the quasi-historical kings of Ireland, the last of whom was Cathal mac Finghuine (died 742). Narratives of this group differed in terms of hero, event, and villain, and journeys to the otherworld and encounters with the supernatural figured prominently. The Fionn (Fenian) cycle became popular in the twelfth century. Earlier texts depicted the hero as a powerful seer, but the twelfth-century *Agallamh na Seanórach* (Colloquy of the old men) showed Fionn mac Cumhaill in his familiar form as a brave outlaw, leading a band of trusted followers, the Fianna. The heroes made frequent visits to the otherworld, and Fionn's son Oisín played a central role.



Cú Chulainn carries Ferdiad across the river in *Irish Iliad*. (Squire, Charles. *Celtic Myth & Legend, Poetry & Romance*, 1905)

Many of the Fenian tales were recognizable *Märchen* types, and Fenian ballads began appearing in the twelfth century as well. The popularity of the cycle is demonstrated by its persistence in twentieth-century oral tradition.

The sagas were performed in the evening, with a single saga sometimes lasting many nights. The basic narrative frame was often overshadowed by long descriptive asides, fanciful etymologies regarding place-names, and meticulous descriptions of warriors or retinues. Such “digressions” are often dismissed as professional pedantry, but they may equally have reflected different aesthetics with regard to narrative form and content.

Icelandic Sagas

The term *saga* derives from the Old Norse verb meaning “to say,” connoting a lengthy reported narrative. A number of subgenres were recognized, varying in focus, historicity, tone, and style. Some of this variation stemmed from historical changes in both the saga and Scandinavian culture from the twelfth through the fourteenth centuries. Regional differences existed as well.

As in Ireland, the earliest Scandinavian sagas were written in Latin and focused on saints. Icelandic clerics soon opted for the vernacular, however. Closely related to the saints’ lives were the sagas of kings (*konungasögur*), royal biographies set in various parts of Scandinavia. Composed primarily in the twelfth and early thirteen centuries, these sagas often had lay authors. *Heimskringla*, for instance, a compendious saga of the kings of Norway, was authored by Snorri Sturluson.

This biographic tendency carried over into the *Íslendingasögur* of the thirteenth century—sagas concerning famous Icelanders. The text often focused on heroes (*Njáls saga*), outlaws (*Grettis saga*), explorers (*Eiríks saga rauða*—the saga of Eirík the Red), districts (*Laxdoela saga*), or poets (*Egils saga*). Often termed *family sagas*, the narratives sometimes followed several generations within a family or district. In addition, they often included poetry, legendary material, and other items of folklore. In contrast to the kings’ sagas, they were usually anonymous works.

As western Scandinavia came into greater contact with Europe, the sagas changed. On the one hand, authors turned to the legendary and mythological past of their people, writing sagas about ancient times (*fornaldursögur*). On the other hand, the European romance became a prime court entertainment, and derivative or translated sagas known as *riddarasögur*, or “knights’ sagas,” were produced both in Norway and in Iceland. *Märchen* elements figured prominently in these late works.

On saga performance and use, we know relatively little. Evidence from the thirteenth-century *Sturlunga saga* indicates that traditional storytellers recounted

sagas orally; performers in the cosmopolitan court of Norway may have read aloud from manuscripts. Performance occurred in the evening, and a single narrative could stretch over days or weeks. Further, sagas could be commissioned or presented as gifts.

Thomas A. DuBois

See Also Epic; Hero/Heroine, Folk.

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Scatology

Folklore concerning excrement, flatulence, urine, and bodily organs involved in the process of defecation. Although many would assume scatological folklore is uniformly obscene or jocular, the range of meanings associated with defecation spans a broad spectrum and varies cross-culturally. Within many traditional cultures, for example, excrement is carefully studied to determine aspects of an individual's health and well-being, and in parts of agrarian Germany, the size of one's cow manure pile served as an index of social standing and wealth. Medieval European texts and church iconography indicate an association of defecation with brazen sinfulness or the devil. Navajo coyote tales often contain scatological humor, as do trickster tales from other Native American and African cultures.

Scatological terms function in many cultures as mild or extreme verbal obscenities. The study of scatological lore from culture to culture furnishes insights into the variety of human responses to even the most basic of physical experiences. Serious inquiry has been hampered at times, however, by folklorists' or editors' disinclination to publish scatological materials or broach the topic in detail.

Scatological folklore, even if left unpublished, has been collected in Europe and the United States for a long period. Folktale collectors such as the Russian A. N. Afanas'ev or the Norwegians Peter Christen Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Moe recorded numerous *Märchen* and anecdotes relating scatological themes. Afanas'ev eventually published his materials, although most nineteenth- and early twentieth-century collectors refrained from doing so. Occasionally, erotic and scatological humor was published privately in small, limited editions intended for a small circle of scholars. Classic folklore indexes such as the *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* acknowledge the existence of such material in their numbering systems (e.g., X700–799, “Humor Concerning Sex”) but avoid citing examples.

Within agrarian society, traditional folktales often possess both polite and bawdy versions, to be used in different contexts. The romantic tale type entitled “The Birthmarks of the Princess” (AT 850), for instance, frequently contains ribald scatological humor. In a Norwegian version of the tale, a peasant pig herder wins the right to see the princess naked and uses his knowledge of the color of her pubic hair to certain advantage. In a suitor contest later in the same narrative, the lad tricks his opponent into consuming human excrement, thereby rendering his breath so distasteful that the princess cannot countenance him during the night but must turn to face the lad instead.

Many folksongs contain scatological versions as well, as do riddles and jokes. Folktale and folksong collections that avoid such material run the risk of presenting an inaccurate picture of folk humor and entertainment.

Throughout agrarian Europe and North America, riddles often contain both an “innocent” answer and one based on erotic or scatological details. The scatological reference may be the first to spring to mind, creating humor when the riddle poser cites the innocent answer instead. A familiar example is provided by the following riddle: “What does a man do on two feet, a dog on three, and a woman sitting down?—Shake hands.”

Native American myths and tales contain scatological motifs as well. The motif of magic birth from bodily secretions (T541.8), for instance, occurs among Northwest Coast tribes. In addition, trickster figures (e.g., Coyote, Raven) often display their social ineptitude through improper defecation. Thus, in a Navajo myth, Coyote's improper urination pollutes his wife's home and drives away all her family, and Coyote's brothers-in-law climb higher and higher into the neighboring trees in order to find firewood unsoiled by the trickster. Mention of

scatological errors was perceived as hilariously funny by native audiences, who were extremely decorous about the act of defecation.

Medieval texts from Europe allow us to examine changes in scatological concepts in one cultural area over a long period. In theological writing and art during both the medieval and the Reformation periods, fecal imagery served as an important metaphor for sin and sinfulness. Church paintings and manuscript marginalia often depicted sinners kissing the buttocks of the devil, and anticlerical folklore of the period often used this same “brownosing” image. Illustrations of this sort sometimes represented sexual acts, but many references and illustrations depicted persons consuming or collecting feces. Martin Luther’s sermons, too, made numerous references to the devil as an entity who feasts upon human excrement and hell as a place pervaded by the foul odor of defecation. These references may strike the modern reader as coarse or inappropriate, but they appear to have been normal, albeit vivid, metaphors in earlier eras.

Scatological humor from the medieval period apparently drew upon serious, theological uses of fecal imagery. Chaucer’s “Summoner’s Tale,” for instance, concerned an effort to divide a fart into twelve equal portions—a parodic reference to the Last Supper. Similarly, the medieval poem *Audigier* parodied high court romance texts through the substitution of a turd hero for the typical knight in armor. Scatology undoubtedly furnished more vivid metaphors in earlier times, when commodes, outhouses, and primitive sewer systems imprinted the smells and memories of defecation more clearly on people’s minds. Latrine humor is still common in armies, where the construction and maintenance of toilet facilities during field maneuvers approaches the experiences of traditional societies.

Folk speech reflects popular attitudes toward scatological matters. In many cultures, terms for both excrement and the body parts responsible for defecation constitute rich sources of obscene expressions as well as euphemisms. In North American English, for instance, polite or clinical terms (e.g., *penis*, *vulva*, *anus*, *feces*, *urine*) covary with a host of obscene or off-color terms (e.g., *dick*, *cunt*, *ass*, *shit*, *piss*), which in turn vary with respect to gravity and usage. Terms differ both in the degree to which they are permitted in normal conversation and in the extent to which they evoke their original referents. The terms *shit*, *crap*, and *turd* ostensibly denote the same referent (i.e., feces) but have different connotations and customary uses. Scatological terms may be used to comment metaphorically on a given situation (e.g., “What’s all this shit around here?” in reference to a messy room) or may occur as simple expletives (e.g., “Shit!” in reference to a surprising turn of events). In either case, the decision to use such language helps speakers portray themselves in public, maintain community solidarity, or differentiate themselves or the moment from others.

In addition to such obscene terms, Americans—like others the world over—employ a host of euphemisms when referring to scatological phenomena.

Expressions such as “visit the restroom,” “powder one’s nose,” or “pass wind” constantly come in and out of fashion, as speakers grapple with whether to sound coarse or prudish. Additional terms are used when discussing scatology with children (e.g., *kaka*, *poop*, *doo-doo*, *pee-pee*). Using euphemisms or child speech in unusual contexts leads to humor, as in the case of a police officer saying, “You’re in deep doo-doo” for the expected “You’re in deep shit” (i.e., “You’re in trouble”). Despite this pattern of historical shifts, however, certain terms (e.g., *fart*, *shit*) have existed in the language for millennia and will certainly remain part of North American culture in the future.

Children’s folklore offers some of the richest stores of scatological material. Feces and urine figure prominently in the narratives of young children, and scatological terms become important in insults and jokes throughout childhood and adolescence. The “hand-fart,” made with the hand under the armpit, or the “raspberry,” made with the lips, constitute potent comments and put-downs. Jokes and folk sayings about flatulence (e.g., “He who smelled it, dealt it”) offer young performers the opportunity to match situation with witticism. Telling scatological “dirty jokes” can build solidarity among children vis-à-vis their teachers or other adults, who usually disapprove of the subject or performance. Taunts averring misuse of excrement or problems in defecation abound as well. Folklore of this sort, once common to adult and preadult communities alike, has apparently grown more taboo among adults during the last several centuries throughout Europe and North America.

Scatological imagery pervades folk perceptions of other communities or cultures. Interethnic stereotypes often focus on the means of defecation as well as the sexual habits and diets of strangers. Unwelcome outsiders are said to use restrooms incorrectly or to dispose of excrement in foolish or dangerous ways. They are accused of attracting rodents and insects through their lack of hygiene and their ignorance of toilets. Interethnic scatological humor reflects deep misgivings about the nature of people of differing cultures and is widespread throughout the world.

Often, such stereotyped scatological lore becomes compared in jokes shared by two communities. In an English-French interethnic joke, for instance, an Englishman criticizes a Frenchman for France’s deplorable restrooms. The Frenchman’s reply uses scatology as a prime metaphor for cultural imperatives: “We eat well, you shit well. It’s all a question of priorities.” The joke encapsulates both English and French stereotypes about each others’ cuisines, toilets, and obsessions. Occasionally, groups will depict themselves as coarser than their counterparts in other cultures, as in Australian interethnic jokes in which the hypermasculine Australian hero displays sneering disregard for societal rules of hygiene and decorum, such as where to urinate and how to refer to excretions. Seemingly self-denigrating humor of this type often occurs in postcolonial situations, in which one culture (i.e., that

of the colonized) has long been viewed as inferior to another (i.e., that of the colonizer). The Australian joke allows tellers to embrace their country's negative stereotype and transform it into a virtue, with a frankness superior to the supposedly overly refined and delicate manners of the English.

Scatological folklore is closely linked to sexual folklore and obscenity. All of these topics have posed difficulties to folklorists since they are traditionally taboo subjects in academic discourse. Many of the contributors to the journal *Maledicta*, for instance, use pseudonyms when publishing their studies. Folklorists run the risk of upsetting their informants as well when they transform remarks made in an intimate context into a scholarly text available for all to read. And newspaper journalists surveying the proceedings of academic conferences may ridicule the profession by citing scatological references as illustrations of the triviality or perversity of folklore studies. Despite these drawbacks, however, scatological folklore offers intriguing insights into the transformation of human physical experiences into cultural symbols and perceptions.

Thomas A. DuBois

See Also Belief, Folk; Joke; Obscenity.

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Semiotics

The study of signs used to communicate. Folklore studies and semiotics, both of which offer interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary perspectives on human communication, have mutually influenced each other as they have developed over the last century or so. Each, of course, has various schools and traditions, but there are important convergences between them, both in the history of the disciplines and in current practice. Within semiotics, we can usefully distinguish an Americanist tradition drawing its insights and methods from the polymath Charles Sanders Peirce, a French (and, more broadly, European) tradition inspired by the Geneva linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (often denominated by Saussure's preferred term, *semiologie*), and a Slavic tradition—elaborated especially in Prague, Moscow, and Tartu—whose prominent practitioners include several with strong interests in folklore traditions. Common to all three schools of thought is a concern with the functioning of signs as the means for interpersonal communication, especially the highly elaborated sign systems that characterize artistic communication. Although each school conceives the sign in slightly different ways, all might agree to define the sign as something that stands for something else, to some person and in some respect. Signs may be typologized differently by each tradition (sign versus symbol, symbol versus icon versus index, arbitrary versus motivated sign, and so on), but semioticians share an interest in understanding how people and societies utilize signs to embody meanings and values and to communicate them to one another. Each intellectual tradition offers certain insights or approaches of potential use to folklorists, and each has been influenced to greater or lesser degree by their application to folklore materials.

Of the three trends, the Slavic tradition is most heavily indebted to the work of folklorists, who had a formative role in its evolution. Developing first in the Moscow Linguistic Circle and then in the Prague Linguistic Circle, Slavic semiotics numbered among its founders several individuals with strong interests in folklore texts and traditions. The most prominent figure, Roman Jakobson, later made contributions to linguistics, ethnology, cognitive science, philology, and literary studies, but he began his lifelong inquiries into the sign by studying Russian folklore texts, to which he returned periodically throughout his life. One of Jakobson's close colleagues was the folklorist Petr Bogatyrev, who remained

focused on folk traditions throughout his career, from his early days studying folk theater and puppetry in cooperation with Jakobson to his later concern with folk costume, folk poetry, magic, and ritual laughter. The two men were founding members of both the Moscow and the Prague circles. Jakobson's folkloric concerns centered on the poetics of traditional Slavic verse, wherein he noticed a pervasive use of poetic parallelism—the repetition from line to line of a stable phrase with variable contents. In the folk poetry traditions he studied, Jakobson saw parallelism as a canonical feature defining the construction of verse; this became the key to his broader explorations of parallelism in the artistic verse of various authors.

Bogatyrev's most important contributions to folklore theory grew out of his attention to the function of folklore materials and texts in social interactions. Reacting to the excessive ahistoricism and decontextualization of the emerging trend of formalist literary criticism, Bogatyrev insisted on the variable meanings that any sign may have when situated in concrete sociohistorical and social-interactional contexts or when moved from one to another. Drawing examples from folksong, folk costume, and especially folk theater and puppetry, Bogatyrev explored, with rich ethnographic detail, the interactions of structure and function in folklore. Studying the folk costumes of Moravian Slovakia, he showed how costumes indexed certain social statuses (e.g., single versus married, male versus female) and how the costume system generated a larger sense of ethnic identity, of "our-ness." His works on folk theater genres contributed both to the emerging Prague Circle theories of theatrical semiotics and to the avant-garde experiments of interwar Prague.

Two other important Russian thinkers of the same generation significantly contributed to the development of semiotics and folklore, although both took care to distance themselves in certain ways from formalism and semiotics. Vladimir Propp devised a method of morphological analysis and applied it to Russian magic tales; he found that, despite their quite different surface features of character and plot, the tales shared a single compositional framework or morphology. His book, once translated into English in 1958, had very wide influence on both literary theorists and folklorists as they sought to articulate structural analyses of both artistic and folkloric narratives. Mikhail Bakhtin never counted himself a folklorist but took advantage of the contemporary fascination with folk culture among Soviet cultural commissars to argue his theories of dialogism in language and life. He traced styles and elements of folk humor as they were incorporated historically into the emergent literary genres and offered a brilliant analysis of Rabelais that indeed constituted a richly detailed ethnography of the folklife of Europe in the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

Jakobson left the Soviet Union for exile in Prague and the United States; Bakhtin suffered many years of internal exile during which he had few opportunities to

publish or teach. Bogatyrev returned from Prague to the Soviet Union, where he, like Propp, taught for decades but in relative obscurity; neither again achieved the kind of insights or influence they had had in their earlier days. The conjunction of folklore and semiotics was picked up again only in the 1960s, when a circle of scholars in Tartu and Moscow once more turned to folkloric texts, especially myths, as elements in constructing a semiotics of culture.

The Slavic semioticians were inspired by Saussure's crucial programmatic work suggesting a transdisciplinary semiology to be developed from the science of linguistics, although they soon found fault with Saussure and explored other conceptions of the sign. But Saussure had continued to have both direct and indirect influence, especially among francophone scholars. One of the foundational figures of modern structuralism, Claude Lévi-Strauss, employed folkloric texts (especially myths) in his elaboration of a method of structural anthropology (drawing inspiration as well from Propp's morphological method but criticizing it as inadequate). His contemporary, Roland Barthes, employed folklore and, more often, popular culture in propagating a Saussurean semiology that profoundly influenced literary and cultural theory in the 1960s and later. Extending Lévi-Strauss's and Barthes's structural method—some would say to the point of *reductio ad absurdum*—A. J. Greimas continued to employ folkloric texts as the testing ground of a theory and a method that were briefly in vogue but now seem to be of little interest (especially to American scholars).

The giant of American semiotics, Charles S. Peirce, had virtually nothing to say about folklore in his massive oeuvre, which, in any case, remained little known until recent decades. But his systematic investigation of the sign in all its aspects and functions provided an analytical tool and perspective that crystallized the thinking of contemporary American semioticians in crucial ways. Two figures were pivotal here: again Jakobson, who discovered Peirce upon arriving in the United States during World War II, and Thomas A. Sebeok, who has been both an intellectual and an institutional father of modern semiotics. Jakobson did not incorporate Peirce's ideas into his own analyses of folkloric or literary texts to any great extent but instead celebrated Peirce and promoted interest in his writings.

Within a vast and complex schema of sign modes and functions, Peirce distinguished three ways in which a sign can relate to its object: An *icon* is related by similarity, an *index* is related by real connection, and a *symbol* is related by convention. Jakobson took up this triple distinction to refocus his long-standing concerns with the nature of signs in social and especially artistic communication. Revising Peirce's tripartite scheme, Jakobson took the two oppositions of actual versus imputed and similarity versus contiguity and elaborated a four-way distinction between *icon* (actual similarity), *index* (actual contiguity), *symbol* (imputed contiguity), and *artifice* (imputed similarity, which for Peirce would be

subsumed under “symbol”). Whether we retain Peirce’s triad or adopt Jakobson’s revisions, the division of sign relations and Peirce’s corollary divisions of sign functions, modes, and effects have been employed as powerful tools to organize analyses and discussions of complex folklore texts and events.

A scholar whose breadth of expertise parallels that of Peirce himself, Sebeok followed Jakobson’s example of employing folkloric texts (especially oral poetry and other verbal art forms) as the material on which to hone semiotic methods of analysis. Equally influential as his own writings has been Sebeok’s entrepreneurial work as the organizer of seminars and institutes (including the Folklore Institute at Indiana University) and as the publisher and editor of folkloric and semiotic works of all kinds. Sebeok edited, for instance, such key articles as Lévi-Strauss’s “The Structural Study of Myth” (1955) and Jakobson’s “Linguistics and Poetics” (1960) and served as editor of the *Journal of American Folklore*.

Although few contemporary folklorists self-identify as semioticians and few contemporary semioticians give as much attention to folklore as those just discussed, the influence—both direct and indirect—of semiotics on folklore theory in recent decades has been profound. The traces are varied: Though few folklorists today engage in structural analyses of folktales or myths, all are expected to know of the approaches of Propp and Lévi-Strauss. The concern with ethno-poetics and the methods used to carry out detailed analyses of the compositional strategies of oral poets and poetic traditions derive, in very large part, from Jakobson’s example. Students of folk theater and puppetry must begin with the work of Bogatyrev and his Prague Circle colleagues. And Bakhtin’s celebration of the culture of resistance of medieval and Renaissance peasants, the carnivalesque and transgressive, and his contribution to writing a “history of laughter” offer a reinvigorating inspiration to today’s folklorists. Finally, the complex semiotic schema elaborated by Peirce can provide a very powerful apparatus around which to organize analyses of those complex, multivocal, multichannel, and multisensory experiences that constitute the folkloric arts.

Frank Proschan

See Also Linguistic Approach; Structuralism.

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Shamanism

The worldview system in northern cultures, particularly those in which a religious leader, a shaman, plays a central role as the mediator between this world and the upper and nether realms of the universe, the leader's main role being that of a healer, an officiant at sacrifices, or a divine prophet. The phenomenon of shamanism is extremely complex and multifaceted. The word *saman* is derived from a Tungus word meaning "a person with special supranormal skills" (the Tungus are an indigenous people of Siberia). When the concept of shamanism was introduced into international literature, its meaning was significantly broadened.

In the cultures where it is practiced, shamanism is not a religion in the narrow sense of compartmentalized Western thinking, which rigidly separates realms of experience; rather, it is a worldview system or a "grammar of mind" that is closely interrelated with ecology, economy, and social structure. Mythic knowledge in shamanic societies is partly collective knowledge shared by the clan and partly esoteric property owned solely by the shamans. This specific knowledge is particularly important to the status of the shaman and is transmitted from one shaman to another in an initiatory education process.

A special grammar of mind is typical of shamanism and designates a way of life and a culture in which the chosen leader, the shaman, occupies a central role. This grammar implies competence in a certain shamanic folklore repertoire, specific skills in performing ritual acts, and knowledge of the shamanic language and the rules of the generic and ritual grammar observed not only in the shamanic sessions but also in the behavior and everyday life of this kind of society. In order to understand shamanism as a religious, social, and cultural phenomenon, it should be analyzed as a whole, taking into consideration both the visible, manifest elements of



Ecuadorian shaman directs solstice festivities in Cochasqui, north of Quito, Ecuador, June 26, 2005. (AP/Wide World Photos)

shamanism and the invisible, latent meanings and messages in the depth structure motivating the behavior of the people who share a shamanic culture as a basis for their societies.

Recently, the concept of shamanism has been extended to an unwarranted degree in the popular press. The term *shamanism* has not only been used to characterize certain ecstatic and other traditional rituals of so-called primitive peoples but also to describe phenomena of Christianity and even the personae cultivated by popular rock musicians. Experts in shamanistic research regard this trend as a devaluation of the concept. Many criticize the overemphasis on ecstasy as a religious experience par excellence, as described, for example, by Mircea Eliade.

Since the middle of the nineteenth century, attempts have been made to account for shamanism as a mental disorder (e.g., schizophrenia or epilepsy). In such hypotheses, however, the problem has been oversimplified. Although the aptitude for exceptional experiences is one of the criteria of “shamanhood,” and though periods of madness seem inherent in shamanic initiation, shamans usually are ordinary men and women who, often involuntarily, have to accept the painful vocation of shamanizing.

Phenomenologically, shamanism could be defined on the basis of a number of criteria. Ecstatic techniques are used to find a way into other worlds or dimensions

of reality. There is a belief in more than one soul; therefore, a free soul is believed to leave the body in trance to make trips to the other world, where it assumes various shapes (e.g., animal shapes). There is a three-level model of the universe, and the role of the shaman is to mediate between these levels. There is also a belief in helping spirits who assist the shaman. In addition, the shaman achieves his or her ends by using ritual paraphernalia, which vary culturally: drum, dress, bag, mask, and so forth.

When using shamanic categories, it is important to make a distinction between such cultures as that of a number of Mandshu-Tungusian peoples who have the concept of *saman* as a linguistic entry in their native lexicon and those who know parallel phenomena but do not have a lexical entry for the concept (e.g., most Arctic peoples or the Ob-Ugric people of the Khanty). Furthermore, many cultures have neither the word nor the phenomenon. According to the proposed definition, African American spirit possession cults, for example, are not shamanistic.

Generally speaking, the ideological aspect of shamanism has been underestimated in research into the phenomenon. The transmission of the traditional knowledge from one shaman to another is a major element of shamanistic initiation. One of the most important criteria in the choice of a new shaman is certainly the candidate's expertise in the ideological traditions of the culture.

Efforts toward a more holistic interpretation of shamanic folklore texts should determine their cosmological and astral mythical background and the way this relationship is revealed in rituals, expressed in mythic narratives, and interpreted and understood by the members of the culture.

Juha Pentikäinen

See Also Divination; Medicine, Folk; Religion, Folk.

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Shape-Shifters

Also known as transmogrification or transforming, shape-shifting involves characters with the ability to change themselves into animal, vegetable, mineral, and supernatural forms. Such characters are commonly encountered in hero traditions. Shape-shifting may occur in many ways and for a variety of purposes. A common situation involves a man's attempts to win a woman. Tales and songs of this type often involve a contest, as in the ballad usually known as "Twa Magicians," in which the "lusty smith" eventually wins the woman's maidenhead when she turns herself into a bed and he shape-shifts into a green coverlet or eiderdown. The ability of a hero or heroine to maintain a hold on the beloved while he or she is being changed into all manner of usually loathly or uncomfortable things is also met with quite often, as in the ballad of "Tam Lin."

Another frequent use of shape-shifting occurs in the form of contests between sorcerers or between the hero and the villain, as in the Scandinavian tale of Farmer Weathersky, in which Weathersky—in reality the Devil—is out-shifted by a young hero named, in English translation, Jack. In ballads such as "The False Knight" and its variants, the Devil, in the form of a knight, appears to a small boy on the road and asks questions that the young boy artfully parries, thus, it is implied, escaping damnation.

Shape-shifting may also be used for disguise in order to escape from bondage, elude pursuers, or enter otherwise impenetrable castles. The wicked queen in "Snow White" uses a number of disguises in her attempts to kill the heroine. Often a human will take animal form as a disguise, a theme that is well attested in classical and other mythologies, as well as in folklore.

Shape-shifting is a standard element in trickster traditions around the world. In Native American traditions, the ability of heroes to shape-shift, or transform, is

extremely widespread and usually associated with trickster figures such as Coyote, Hare, and Rabbit. The African Anansi, or Spider, is a great shape-shifter. In Chinese and Japanese tradition, shape-shifting is common, especially in relation to the fox.

Graham Seal

See Also Magic; Magicians; Magic Tale; Trickster.

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Sleeping Beauty

Usually titled in books of fairy tales “The Sleeping Beauty,” this widespread, ancient, and well-known folktale is almost always told in English simply as “Sleeping Beauty.” Known in one version or another since at least the fourteenth century, “Sleeping Beauty” has had a long literary as well as folkloric life. Successive tellers of the tale, such as Perrault (“*La Belle au Bois Dormant*”) and the Grimms (in English, “Little Briar Rose”), have added to it or subtracted from it in various ways, leaving us with the modern version as more-or-less solidified in the Disney animated feature film.

Most readers will be familiar with the Grimm plot, in which a queen, after many years of unsuccessful attempts, finally gives birth. Overjoyed, the king and queen invite everyone in the kingdom to come to the palace to celebrate the birth of their daughter. There are thirteen wise women in the kingdom, and all must be invited. Unfortunately, the king has only twelve gold plates and so, to avoid embarrassment, invites only twelve. While these women bestow gifts of beauty and happiness on the royal baby, the offended thirteenth wise woman angrily curses the child, saying that she will die at fifteen years of age through a prick in her finger. One of the invited wise women is able to lighten the curse from death to one hundred years of sleep.

Spinning machines and their sharp spindles are immediately banned in the kingdom, but in her fifteenth year, the princess comes across an old woman



The Prince awakens the Sleeping Beauty in this illustration by Gordon Frederick Browne for *Children's Stories from Tennyson* by Nora Chesson, 1914. (The Bridgeman Art Library International)

spinning in a castle tower. The princess picks up the spindle and pricks herself, bringing the prophetic curse into effect. She falls asleep, and so does everyone else in the palace, from the king and queen down to the lowliest servant and even the flies on the wall. A great thorn hedge grows around the palace, cutting it off from the world. The legend of the sleeping beauty attracts many young men to the palace, but despite their skill, strength, and determination they all fail to break through and waken the sleeping beauty with a kiss. Eventually, one hundred years pass, and a prince does succeed in breaking through. He kisses the sleeping princess, and she wakes, along with everyone and everything else in the palace. Life returns to normal, and the young prince and Sleeping Beauty marry.

Some elements of the story can be traced to Greek myth, though the motifs of a sleeping princess and magic sleep in general are widely distributed in the world's folktale traditions. The popularity and wide spread of this story and its variants have attracted extensive comment and analysis. Psychological and psychoanalytic approaches generally interpret the story as a metaphor of the sexual awakening of young women that, whatever the parents may think or do about it, is bound to occur sooner or later. In Bettelheim's *The Uses of Enchantment*, for example, there is an extended discussion of the Sleeping Beauty stories along these lines, stressing that the theme of the futility of trying to prevent the child's sexual maturity is common to all versions of the story.

Folklorists would perhaps be more inclined to argue that it is unlikely that every version of “The Sleeping Beauty,” past and present, revolves around this theme or that the story was or is told with such intentions. While Bettelheim and other psychoanalysts may be right about some, even many, tellings of this tale, it is not likely to have the same significance in all the societies and in all the periods in which it has been told, a notion akin to the Jungian “one-symbol-does-for-all” archetype. Only on-the-ground fieldwork can determine the significance of any particular telling of “The Sleeping Beauty,” or any other folktale. The fact that there have been and continue to be so many differing interpretations of the story is a testament to its popularity, longevity, and wide distribution. That so many meanings can be found within it is due to that peculiar magic we continue to find in those reworked folktales known as “fairy tales.”

Graham Seal

See Also Cinderella; Fairy Tale Heroes; Shape-Shifters; Snow White.

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Snow White

In their version of this favorite and widely known fairy tale, “Little Snow White” (no. 53), the Grimms begin like this: “Once upon a time, in the middle of winter when the snow flakes fell like feathers from the sky, a queen sat at a window which had a frame of black ebony. And as she was sewing while looking at the snow, she pricked her finger with the needle and three drops of blood fell on the snow. The red looked so beautiful on the white snow that she thought to herself, ‘I wish I had a child as white as snow, as red as the blood, and with hair as black as the wood of the window frame.’”

Thus the scene is set for the birth of Snow White, the death of her mother, and the taking of a new wife by the king, Snow White's father, one year later. All goes well until Snow White turns seven. Then the trouble begins. The stepmother turns out to be of the wicked variety and is insanely envious of Snow White's beauty, imploring the magic "mirror, mirror on the wall" to tell her "who is the fairest of them all" and receiving the answer she does not wish to hear.

As most children know from either the Disney animated feature (the first version of which was released in 1937) or from any number of children's books, Snow White is expelled from the castle. The wicked queen orders a woodsman to murder the young girl in the forest, but the man cannot bring himself to commit this cold-blooded deed and instead leaves Snow White alone in the wilderness. Here she is found and looked after by seven dwarfs. But the wicked queen discovers that Snow White is not dead and disguises herself in various forms in attempts to kill her. At her third attempt, the queen tricks Snow White into eating a poisoned apple, and the girl dies. She is laid out in a crystal coffin and mourned over by the dwarfs and birds until a handsome prince arrives. He kisses her and, bumping the coffin in the process, wakens her from what was only a deeply drugged sleep after all. She marries the prince, and the wicked stepmother is punished by being made to wear red-hot shoes in which she must dance until her death. The young couple lives happily ever after and, in the manner of most fairy tales and folktales, the cultural equilibrium is reestablished with the defeat of evil and the succession of the generations.

This version of Snow White is satisfyingly complete, with its elaborated narrative structure, its deployment of many ancient and widespread motifs of myth and legend (including the helpers, the wicked stepmother, the narcissistic streak of the queen, the sleep of the heroine, and her awakening with a kiss), and its just rewards and deserts for heroine, hero, and villainess. Most of the many other versions of the tale are less refined and extended, though they tend to retain the symbolic elements of blood, whiteness, and black hair and the motivations of the wicked stepmother as essentially sexual jealousy.

Differences between various versions of Snow White-type tales are highlighted in a number of analyses undertaken from various perspectives. Steven Swann Jones, for instance, shows how the pattern of action varies in three different versions of "Snow White." Nevertheless, comparison of the versions reveals an underlying structure. The heroine may be killed by a poisoned apple in one version, by a raisin in another, or by a poisoned needle in yet another; nonetheless, she is killed, and the narrative proceeds to the next significant action. In comparing the Grimms' version of Snow White with French and Italian versions, Jones points to the quite different ways in which each of the significant actions within the story is accomplished.

In the Grimms' opening situation a queen learns from a magical mirror that the heroine is more beautiful than she. In the Italian version, it is a stepmother

Postcard from 1812 showing the seven dwarves finding Snow White asleep in their bedroom. (Hulton Archive/Getty Images)



who resents her new stepdaughter. In the French version, the stepmother is jealous of her husband's apparent preference for the stepdaughter. In the second significant action, the Grimms' version has the queen ordering a servant to kill the heroine, but instead the servant leaves her in the forest. In the Italian version, the stepmother commands the stepdaughter to tend a dangerously located basil plant. In the French version the stepmother asks her husband to abandon the heroine on a distant mountain.

The third significant action in the Grimms' version involves the dwarfs taking in the heroine. In the Italian version an eagle carries her to a fairy palace. In the French version, the heroine surreptitiously performs domestic chores in the palace of forty giants until they find her out and adopt her. In the fourth significant action the Grimms have the wicked queen discover her location by the magic mirror. In the Italian version, the eagle tells the stepmother the heroine's whereabouts. The French story has the stepmother consulting the sun about any woman more beautiful than herself and discovering the heroine's whereabouts accordingly. In the fifth significant action the Grimms' persecuting queen attempts to murder the heroine, first with a poisoned staylace and comb; eventually she succeeds with the poisoned apple. In the Italian tale, the stepmother enlists the aid of a witch, who fails to kill the heroine with poisoned sweetmeats but succeeds with a poisoned dress. Finally, in the Grimms' version a prince obtains the heroine's body. He bumps her coffin, and Snow White revives and marries him. In

the Italian version, the prince obtains the heroine's body, and his mother then removes the poisoned dress in order to wash it, thus causing the heroine to return to life. Heroine and hero are married. In the French conclusion, the father of the prince who discovers the body presses the heroine's chest, causing her to regurgitate the raisin and to breathe again. Prince and heroine then marry.

Jones's purpose in carrying out this enlightening analysis is to pursue a larger argument about narrative structure in folktales, but his analysis also usefully reveals the extent to which all versions of a particular tale are essentially different ways of telling the same story. The means by which the significant actions that make up the core story are brought about is not as important as the carrying out of the actions themselves. The actions, usually strung together in the same sequence, lead inexorably to the climax of the story and to its resolution in the traditional happy ending in which hero and heroine are united in marriage. This narrative structure and its culmination are a symbolic parallelism of the male and female principles that motivate many folktales, especially those of the fairy tale variety. Similar comparisons are possible between different versions of most folktales.

Like most fairy tales, Snow White has numerous international parallels, including the Jewish story of Romana. In her tale, of Middle Eastern origin and perhaps the archetype of "Snow White and the Seven Dwarves," Romana falls in with forty thieves rather than the seven dwarves. The rest of the story is remarkably similar to that of Snow White, with much the same happy ending. Likewise, the theme of the mother, or stepmother, attempting to harm her children or stepchildren is found in many traditions. The brothers S'ad and Sa'id, the sons of a poor woodworker, feature in Persian and Middle Eastern tradition. Their mother falls in love with a wealthy man and, in order to please him, plots to kill her two sons. They escape and after many adventures become rich and honored rulers.

Graham Seal

See Also Cinderella; Fairy Tale Heroes; Shape-Shifters; Sleeping Beauty.

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Speech, Folk

The expressive language use of any group of people sharing a greater or lesser number of local cultural traits. In any living language, there is constant tension between forces promoting stability and uniformity and forces promoting fragmentation and diversity. This essentially dynamic situation is especially evident in languages that have many speakers occupying a large territory and engaged in a wide variety of occupations and activities. In such a context, public education systems and the media consciously or otherwise promote a standard form of speech or forms of speech thought to approach what is considered to be standard and desirable. One of the principal agents of linguistic diversity is the expressive speech of homogeneous groups of people whose geographic location, ethnic background, religion, and occupations, to name the most important features, allow them to be distinguished from other speakers of the same language.

It should be stressed that regional or local speech characteristics, however distinctive, rarely modify the underlying structure of the dominant language; even peculiarities of sound usage (phonology), word shape (morphology), and word order and sentence structure (syntax) do not disguise the fact that a regional or local variety of language belongs to the acknowledged standard tongue. When such changes do operate over a long period of time, new languages come into existence. This is how Latin, once the common language of most of Western Europe, evolved into such modern languages as French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, and Romanian, with their numerous regional varieties.

Although these questions of language evolution, regional varieties of language, and the mechanics of language are chiefly the domain of linguists and dialectologists, the folklorist has a nonetheless valid interest in them, too. Dialectologists map the distribution of words, both from the perspective of the varying meaning of a given word and from that of the different words used to identify a specific object or concept; folklorists may do much the same thing or make use of such linguistic mapping in order to cast light, for example, on the movements of peoples and the cultures they carry with them. Careful comparisons, taking

Argot

A special linguistic code whose purpose is to conceal and to exclude. Also called *cant*, this genre of folk speech differs from standard language principally in vocabulary. However, argots based upon a language (the use of *Romanes* by Gypsies in English-speaking societies, for instance) or dialect differing from that in mainstream social use may diverge from standard speech in more complex ways. Argot's non-standard diction allows its users to communicate with one another secretly. Hence, it most usually occurs among speakers with reasons to hide what they are saying from uninitiated listeners. Argots may merge with other folk speech genres such as jargons and slang.

Groups that have developed argots include persons whose activities are regarded as either illegal or immoral in some social contexts—for example, professional criminals, drug users, and homosexuals. Other groups may develop argots because their activities, though not illegal, require secrecy. Occupations that depend, in part, on tricking clients—gambling and carnival operations, for instance—may generate argots, as may competitive activities in which one team of players wishes to conceal its intentions from another team. Some ethnic groups use their native language as an argot in occupational contexts. Others may employ their language in the same way in social situations to guarantee the privacy of their communication. Argots also may have generational significance; adolescents, for example, often adopt vocabulary usages that exclude their parents from their communications. Argots may also develop in ritual situations, thus allowing religious specialists to deal with topics of esoteric spirituality without revealing sacred secrets to the profane masses. Another possible context for argot development involves communication among members of one sex that is designed to exclude persons of the other sex.

Argots received scholarly attention as early as the fifteenth century, though the first formal dictionary of a cant was probably issued in the 1700s. Francis Grose's *Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*, first published in 1785, remains an important source of vocabulary usage by British criminals. Folklorists had included argot in their new discipline by the late 1800s. In 1890, the *Journal of American Folklore* published materials on *Shelta*, an argot used by British tinkers. Most studies of argot by folklorists and others (many of which have appeared in the periodical *American Speech*) have focused only on the compilation of word lists and their definitions. These glossaries may provide general comments about the group that uses the argot but often do not deal with specific usages in particular contexts.

More contextually oriented research could identify (1) particular situations in which groups employ specific words and phrases from the argot vocabulary, (2) whom such groups intend to exclude through their use of argot, and (3) the socio-psychological functions, such as group integration, that argots may perform in addition to their practical role in promoting secrecy and privacy of communication. Moreover, the playful dimension of argot, though noted by several commentators, has not received the attention that it deserves. Often, what appear to be attempts at communicative concealment may be artful linguistic flourishes that demonstrate the verbal agility of the speakers more than their desire for secrecy.

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into account other cultural and historical phenomena, enable the folklorist to understand the social pressures involved in producing cultural change or cultural conservatism.

Furthermore, some knowledge of regional forms of speech and the history of a given language is useful, not to say essential, for the complete understanding of the texts of narratives and songs, rhymes, proverbs, riddles, and other forms of verbal expressive folklore in which nonstandard vocabulary and nonstandard usages are embedded. It is axiomatic that the field-worker embarking on the study of the folklore of a particular group must make every effort necessary to master the local idiom. Without a thorough familiarity with the subtleties of local usage, the researcher will be deprived of the insights to be gained from such knowledge, and he or she may miss the significance of words and nuances of meanings in the very texts that are the subject of study. Without such knowledge, the student of a regional or local folklore will focus on what seem to be curious words or phrases (which may be a good deal less curious than the field-worker thinks) and give them more emphasis than they merit.

An important corollary to the issue of nonstandard speech is the question of transcription. On the one hand, some scholars believe regional forms should be standardized when setting the spoken word into a written form, retaining peculiar local words and phrases for "local color." Such scholars maintain that the use of "eye dialect"—approximate renderings of nonstandard pronunciations based on the transcriber's own speech habits (e.g., writing "wuz" for "was")—unnecessarily portrays the original speaker in a demeaning fashion and, in any case, is rarely an accurate rendering of a phonological reality. On the other hand, some scholars, for theoretical reasons, prefer to attempt as accurate an approximation of the spoken word as is possible. The best of these approximations are usually based on a solid grounding in phonetics and the history of the language. It is certain that a standardized version of a text and a so-called folkloric transcription of the same text give two very different visions of the material. It is clearly important both to justify the approach one adopts on theoretical grounds and to provide a clear guide to the system of written conventions used to render the nonstandard forms. Of immediate interest to the field-worker exploring the traditions of a social group is the specialized vocabulary related to the group's primary and other occupations. One cannot appreciate the creative artistry involved in the making of a loggers' song or a song about (and by) members of any other occupation without some familiarity with the technical terms and phrases that are part and parcel of that occupation. The folklorist will need to know the names of tools used by potential informants. For example, to the average person, a plane is a plane, but to a carpenter, it may be no more than a generic term for which the profession has five or six specialized names, each referring to a particular type; to most people, snow is snow, but to the Inuit of the

high Arctic, there may be no single word for snow at all but thirty or forty different words describing particular kinds of snow.

Similarly, it is important to list the folk names for animals, fish, insects, or plants (in addition to learning about the traditional uses to which these may be put); in other words, establishing the local names for things is a first step in defining local taxonomies and a preliminary to understanding the relationship of the social group to the world around it. And lest the impression be given that there is too great a preoccupation with the rural or marginal in society, it should be stressed that scholars have long been preoccupied with creating vocabularies peculiar to urban groups—there are gay lexicons and lexicons of the underworld, of the church, of the military, of airline pilots, and the like. If in the beginning was the word, then the word—the vocabulary of a social group—is one of the first things to be studied.

Also of interest in this area is the field of naming. Nicknames, pet names, names given to domestic animals, the calls used to summon animals, and the vocabulary of animal husbandry all reflect sets of preoccupations. Local history is echoed in the place-names of an area, and not infrequently, local sayings allude to local references, be they to places or people. Thus, the form of the widespread proverbial comparison “as big a liar as . . .” may simply be concluded with the name of a local teller of tall tales. Or the comparison “as deep as Dead Man’s Pond” will allude to a local body of water believed to be bottomless, for example. There are many such reports of traditional genres, including proverbs and riddles, whose effectiveness depends on knowledge of local events or characters. Not infrequently, demands for explanations of the meanings of such local sayings will lead to a variety of anecdotes—some humorous, others serious—knowledge of which further adds to the investigator’s appreciation of the cultural texture of the community under examination.

Many characteristic forms of folk speech are embedded in rhymes. Children’s lore is replete with rhymes, beginning with the nursery rhymes and jingles used by adults or older children with small infants. Then, as children enter school, they learn the teases, the jeers, the taunts and reproofs, the retorts and parodies, the rhymes meant to shock and upset, the epithets and euphemisms, the insults, the tongue twisters, the catches, the wisecracks, and, sometimes, the secret languages shared by their peers, all of which may involve rhyme in part or in whole, not infrequently rhymes that are rhymes only because of the peculiarities of local pronunciation.

Rhyme often goes hand in hand with naming customs. This has long been attested in the area of *blasons populaires*, the nicknames attributed by the members of one community to the inhabitants of neighboring communities. *Blasons populaires* are not, of course, necessarily in rhyme, and folk speech will incorporate pejorative forms of epithet in all manner of colorful sayings. Indeed, an interesting though relatively little studied area of folk speech is that of oaths and

Tongue Twister

A linguistic sequence with difficult phonological combinations. Also called *tongue tanglers*, *tongue teasers*, and *jaw busters*, tongue twisters require agility in articulating sequences of similar sounds at a rapid rate. Sound similarities usually involve long strings of alliteration (the repetition of initial consonant sounds, as in “Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers”), assonance (the repetition of vowel sounds, as in “How now brown cow?”), consonance (the repetition of final consonant sounds, as in “He thrusts his fists against the posts / And still insists he sees the ghosts”), or a combination of these and other sound patterns. Sometimes, tongue twisters utilize elaborate sound inversions in complex juxtapositions—for example, “How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?” Homophones (words and syllables that sound the same) also often occur in tongue twisters (“I saw Esau sitting on a seesaw”). Frequently, tongue twisters rhyme, and most evince regular rhythmic qualities. Some are extremely short, amounting to only a phrase (“rubber baby buggy bumpers”), and others extend for several sentences.

Tongue twisters seem to flourish most among children, who delight in challenging one another to demonstrate their speaking ability. If the tongue twister is brief, the challenge may be to say it several times as quickly as possible. For longer tongue twisters, the challenge is simply to get through it rapidly without making a mistake. A competitive element figures in the performance of tongue twisters when one child recites a difficult text and then calls upon another to do likewise. Some tongue twisters assume the form of a question and answer, one child articulating a traditional alliterative question and expecting another to respond in kind. Often, children delight most when a pronunciation error occurs, especially if that error involves the utterance of a taboo word. For example, a slight juxtaposition of vowel sounds in “I’m not a fig plucker nor a fig plucker’s son, but I’ll pluck figs till the fig plucker comes” can allow a child to say with impunity a word that might otherwise be forbidden.

Though competitive in their own right, tongue twisters may figure into other games, particularly those requiring the payment of a “forfeit.” Drinking games, popular with high school and college students, often focus on the proper enunciation of a tongue twister to an increasingly accelerated rhythm. When someone makes an error, he or she must quickly consume a quantity of beer or other alcoholic drink, thus further impairing the ability to articulate. Some traditional songs incorporate tongue twisters. These verbal challenges may serve as informal, semiserious measures of one’s ability to speak a foreign language. Tongue twisters also have served as formal exercises in elocution, speech therapy, and foreign language instruction.

Though many studies of tongue twisters by folklorists simply provide lists, others have investigated the linguistic patterns and the geographical and generational distribution of the tongue twister. Among topics that merit further attention are studies of similarities and differences in tongue twisters from different languages, the relationship between the popularity of particular texts and the demographics of the children who perform them, and the use of tongue twisters in informal educational contexts.

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swearing. More tastefully, folk speech also includes a variety of blessings and graces, prayers, and toasts, which may be both serious and humorous.

Two types of folk speech that have received attention from scholars are proverbs and proverbial speech and the riddle and riddling question. In the past, scholars tended simply to make lists of examples of proverbs, rarely providing the contextual data essential to understanding how the proverbs were used; yet such data are clearly essential since proverbs may make use both of local words and of allusions to local events or characters. One of the most distinctive features of folk speech, indeed, is the colorful imagery embedded in proverbial similes, exaggerations, metaphors, retorts, and Wellerisms, in which the “color” is an expression of the group’s relationship to its own world and its own worldview.

The same comment can be made about the language of riddles and related forms. The so-called true riddle—a riddle that asks a question in metaphorical terms but that the listener may take literally and that has an answer involving the same opposition between the literal and the metaphorical—frequently refers to local realities. A person unfamiliar with kerosene lamps, for instance, will be stumped when asked what it is that drinks its blood and eats its own guts. The outsider learns not only what is a familiar feature of a local environment but also the characteristic ways in which such features are expressed locally, that is, the nature of local imagery.

A final aspect of folk speech worthy of examination is the relationship between speech and communication. All speech attempts to communicate, but not all communication is necessarily in the form of speech. Much communication is made through gesture, and all cultures have an unwritten code of gestural communication. It is important to take note of the vocabulary of gesture in any community, not because the body of gestures that are locally meaningful may differ greatly or be in some way alien to the dominant culture (though they may be) but because without such a vocabulary, the researcher is denied complete access to local speech. Thus, although gestures signaling greeting or farewell, anger or insult, or directions may be common beyond the local context, some may have evolved specific to a given occupation or activity. Gestures made during card games may not, for example, be noticed by an outsider observing the play, or they may be misinterpreted; similarly, there may be formalized gestures with local significance embedded in traditional performance contexts such as storytelling or singing.

The idiom of any social group emerges in the many kinds of discourse characteristic of the communicative contexts proper to that group. Some of these contexts, in which well-established folkloric genres are embedded, have been well documented and carefully studied from a variety of perspectives. Others have been, until recently, somewhat neglected because of the apparent absence of easily recognizable genres in such discourse contexts. Yet most speech is conversational rather than performative, and it is in conversational speech that local

idiom is given its most natural expression. In performative genres, it is not uncommon to find archaic words and expressions, as if frozen in time; folksong collectors frequently encounter words whose meanings are unclear not only to the collector but to the singer as well. A methodological lesson for the folklore field-worker using a tape recorder is to let the tape recorder run, even when the informant or informants are not actually “performing,” and to have constantly at hand a notebook in which to jot down words and phrases that seem significant.

Gerald Thomas

See Also Language, Play; Language, Secret.

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Spirit

An insubstantial replica, usually invisible, of an object or person. The spirit is often thought to function as a kind of servo-mechanism of the body that it mimics and as a source of its will or other animating or vital principle, so that unconsciousness and sleep may be interpreted as the temporary loss of the spirit and death as its permanent absence. Often, as expressed in Plato, it is believed that there is a pool of spirits somewhere that, from time to time, become incorporated in new bodies. At birth (or during the rituals associated with the newborn), it is important that an appropriate spirit enters the new body and that inappropriate

ones be warded off; at death, it is vital that the old spirit successfully makes its way out of the body.

Anything that creates images may be taken for a conduit into the separate, normally invisible world where spirits live. In other words, spirits may manifest themselves in dreams (as Patroclus's spirit appears to Achilles in the *Iliad*); in mirrors (such as the magic mirror in *Snow White*); in water (which has a reflecting surface and is commonly used in divination); or in the figures seen in tea leaves or coffee grounds, which can be interpreted by someone familiar with the ways of spirits. Mental imagery, induced through a variety of methods—sensory deprivation, hallucinogenic drugs, fasting, meditation, repetitive sounds—is often taken for a manifestation of the spirit world.

In industrial societies, some of these methods have lived on in the belief system known as “spiritualism.” Spiritualism stresses one aspect of the traditional beliefs, namely, the idea that one can consult the spirits of specific dead people, which is done at séances. Such consultation is an ancient tradition and has often been done at burial places, as in the early Russian steppes, where figures known as “stone women” were erected on grave mounds; relatives would sleep at the graves and communicate with the dead through their dreams.

Such figures illustrate a common quality of spirits: They have an affinity for anything that has their shape. To capture a spirit, one may create an image in the shape of its corresponding body. Since spirits also have an affinity for reflecting surfaces, mirrors and vessels of water are often used to hold them in place. These may be placed in or above graves to prevent the spirit of the deceased from wandering about.

Perhaps because they may be manifested in reflections, spirits are taken to be exact opposites (that is, mirror images) of the phenomenal world. Therefore, the spirit world is typically appealed to and approached by means of reversals: The shaman may enter his or her hut backwards in preparing to make contact with the spirits. Traditional dream interpretation, as far back as Artemidorus's *Interpretation of Dreams*, has assumed that the meaning of a dream is based on such reversal—to dream of sorrow means happiness and vice versa.

What is commonly called the “soul” differs from the traditional spirit. Whereas the spirit has a loose connection to the body and, when on temporary furlough from it, is capable of acting on its own, the soul is generally assumed to maintain its connection to the body until death. But like spirits, souls also may stay around after death, sometimes haunting the location where death occurred, and then, once disembodied, they are referred to as “ghosts.” Both the term *ghost* and the term *spirit* also are used to refer to the third member of the Trinity in Christianity: the Holy Ghost (or Holy Spirit).

Paul Barber

See Also Assault, Supernatural; Divination; Medicine, Folk; Religion, Folk.

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Storytelling

The definition crafted in 2000 after much debate by the board of directors of the National Storytelling Network, the principal professional storytelling organization in the United States, reads: “Storytelling is the interactive art of using words, vocalizations, and/or physical movement and gesture to reveal the elements and images of a story to a specific live audience.” The definition is suggestive in what it excludes as well as what it includes. It does include interactivity, the reciprocal flow of energy between teller, audience, and narrative in the moment of live performance. It thus excludes writing, filmmaking, television, video gaming, and other mediating frameworks that interpose between teller and listeners. These later arts, however, grounded as they are upon the genres and principals of storytelling, are ever willing to appropriate the hallowed name of their ancestor for its intimacy and mythic resonance. In its essence, storytelling as we will use the term here is a live and living art, a process of communication and communion between teller and listeners, shaped by various traditions but mediated as little as possible by distancing technologies.

The difficulty in maintaining a definition of storytelling *as* storytelling and not as a metonymy for something quite different is to be found less in the word or the process it denotes than in the cultural mindset within which the act of definition must be attempted. Walter Ong has pointed out that the assumptions of literacy-based civilization have so permeated our thought processes as to breed unchallenged oxymorons such as “oral literature” (or “literary storytelling”). In *Image, Music, Text*, Roland Barthes has beautifully enumerated how narrative (as opposed to storytelling) can exist in “a prodigious variety of genres, themselves distributed among different substances—as if any material were fit to receive man’s stories.” Marshall MacLuhan postulated that “environments are invisible”; and the environment of literature- and media-saturated culture has certainly hidden in plain sight our dependence on the technological artifacts of



Storyteller Rosie Chapman, second from right, tells the story of “Molly the Mouse” as Tatyanna Todd, Khadidja Ngom, and Aryanna Young act out characters during the 2002 Storytelling Festival at the Detroit Public Library. (AP/Wide World Photos)

the story-making process. Storytelling, both as concept and as artistic/political movement, would refocus our attention on the process in its unencumbered form.

Historically, storytelling in primarily oral cultures has functioned as an expression of any and all social castes but takes on distinctive characteristics depending on the nature and functions of a particular group. Thus, storytelling of and for elites or ruling castes tends toward what we know as bardic storytelling, its principal genres being epic, praise song, and genealogy. Whether Homeric epics, the Irish legends of Cuchulain and the *Tain bo Cuiligne*, or the African Mwindo epic, these stories are generally highly formalized and formulaic, passed on by hereditary professional lineages, and often chanted to the accompaniment of stringed instruments such as the harp, lyre, gusle, rebec, or kora.

Storytelling in occupational groups (warriors, hunters, fishermen, pastoralists, and agriculturists, among others) or religious groups revolves around the hero types and activities of that group, whether the genre be epic, tall tale, wonder tale, or sacred teaching tale. These show wide variation in form, ranging from ceremonial or ritual tellings resembling those of traditional epic performances to less formal exchanges in coffeehouses, homes, barracks, or courtyards of monasteries or prayer houses.

Storytelling in peasant or servant groups tends toward the wonder tale, as Max Lüthi, Jack Zipes, and others have shown, to provide imaginative release from the harsh conditions of workaday life. They are often performed as an accompaniment to repetitive menial tasks, such as food storage (picking, canning, drying, and threshing), cloth-weaving, or net-mending, as Appalachian, Hebridean, and Hungarian storytellers have testified. Or they can be just vessels to carry community spirits across the long winter nights. The hero or heroine's journey from outcast wayfarer through magical trials to blessed estate seems designed to lift the laboring heart and mind and to anaesthetize sore fingers. Animal tales are widespread in African, African American, Native American, European, and Asian traditions. Stories in which human and divine traits and conflicts are embodied in animal forms, these tales range in function from simple children's fables and jests to sacred creation myths. *Märchen* and animal tales may thrive in less-formal contexts than bardic or ritual tellings; yet there remains something ceremonial about the repetition of traditional stories, whether in ceili houses (the houses where neighbors gather in rural Irish and Scottish communities for music, dancing, and storytelling) or fishing shacks, around a shaman's fire or a child's bed, or, more recently, at library story hours or revival storytelling festivals.

The storytelling process is often imprecisely understood from opposite sides of the orality/literacy divide. Milman Parry and Albert B. Lord reported that the illiterate bards from whom they collected South Slavic epics naturally assumed that their literate interlocutors could perform such feats of memory as the singers themselves had just demonstrated, and much more as well, since the educated folk had the additional power of literacy. And literate persons often still make the error of assuming that oral traditional storytellers are reciting their stories and verses word for word, as literates would memorize a play or a poem.

Only since we have transited into the epoch of electronic recording and transmitting media has it become possible to examine such notions with any precision, as Parry and Lord were able to in the Balkans in the 1930s and again in the 1950s with their early recording devices. They recognized that oral memory is a process of stitching together performances out of formulaic elements—traditional images, metaphors, stylized action passages, and a range of other syntactic and discursive chunks, arranged with some improvisatory freedom to fit the audience and the occasion. A traditional storyteller learns from hearing these elements repeated in sufficient variety yet stylistic consistency that he or she can make use of their patterns to freely reproduce the community's repertoire of tales, adding their own variations, reflections, and responses to the pressures of the environment. Thus, oral storytelling performances can emerge rather fluidly from the language web of community talk, as Henry H. Glassie beautifully elucidates in the Irish ceili storytelling in *Passing the Time in Ballymemnone* (1982). A particular tale may appear in multiple variants, from different narrators in

different settings, yet each variation can be experienced by the group authentically as “the story.”

While tellers in bardic or religious orders are often trained to what amounts to professional standards and lineages, and perform a distinct high-status social function, tellers in rural or peasant communities can be equivalently recognized and valued by their own peers. In cultures around the world where orality remains a dominant force of cultural transmission, tellers such as the *seanachies* of rural Ireland recorded by the Irish Folklore Commission, or Jack tale tellers of the Hicks-Harmon-Ward extended family of Beech Mountain, North Carolina, are well known as cultural resources and authorities both within and beyond their immediate communities. Yet, as these redoubts of oral culture are increasingly encroached upon first by literacy and then still more disruptively by electronic culture, the practices and repertoires of traditional storytelling are subject to the twin perils of attrition or revival.

The vanishing subject has been both the lamentation and driving force of folklore scholarship since its inception with Johann Gottfried Herder and Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. When Hector Urquhart, friend and informant of the great Scottish folktale collector John Francis Campbell, was a young man in the early nineteenth century, he wrote of the common custom in the Gaelic Highlands of his childhood of gathering to listen to folktales and fairy tales (or *sgeulachd*) as told by itinerant tailors, shoemakers, or other traveling folk. “It was also the custom,” he wrote, “when an *aoidh*, or stranger, celebrated for his store of tales, came on a visit to the village, for us, young and old, to make a rush to the house where he passed the night . . . just as I myself have seen since when a far-famed actor came to the Glasgow theater” (Campbell, 5). Yet Urquhart goes on to report that, after the minister and the schoolmaster came to the village in the 1830s, their disapproval of the practice and their teaching of the written word caused oral storytelling to die away almost completely.

More than a century later, African storyteller Raouf Mama described a similar turn in his native Benin: In the space of twelve years—from 1960, when Benin was granted independence, to 1972, the year of the Beninese revolution—storytelling evenings in Beninese homes declined considerably. Today, that time-honored tradition has gone out of existence. Much of the blame for this must be laid on the colonial educational system, which sought to make the Beninese look down on his native tongue, customs and tradition, culture, and folklore (MacDonald, 9–10).

Similarly, the Appalachian storyteller Ray Hicks, an iconic fixture at the National Storytelling Festival from 1973 to 2000, often said that the doctrinaire ministers of the hardshell Baptist churches drove the traditional wonder tales out of his region of the mountains. “They teacht ‘em out,” he would say. “Said they’s wrong.” The coming of television to rural areas has had a particularly

corrosive impact on the customs of social gathering and listening that are the necessary habitat of extended-form storytelling sessions in the home. These factors and others have driven the transposition of storytelling to more formally constructed contexts, such as libraries, schools, and storytelling revival festivals.

Anthony Wallace placed revivals as one class of revitalization movement, which he defined in general as “the deliberate, organized, conscious effort on the part of members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture” (Wallace, 265). Revival movements celebrate values, customs, and rituals that are thought to have been part of the everyday lives of earlier generations, and whose eclipse is held to symbolize a larger decline in the cultural health of the present. Such movements have long been part of the self-regenerating fabric of cultural life. They tend to emerge in periods when social, political, economic, or technological changes put great stress on cultures and individuals. Though their explicit agenda is to bring back practices belonging to an idealized past, their actual mechanisms are usually homeostatic, and serve to integrate contemporary innovations in context and process by buffering them with traditional imagery and reassuring ritual.

Folk arts in general and storytelling in particular have regularly served as grist for the cultural revival mill. The revival of storytelling in the latter three decades of the twentieth century was part of a pattern that reaches back to include the fairy tale enthusiasm at the court of Versailles that produced the works of Charles Perrault, Marie-Catherine d’Aulnoy, and their peers; the Hasidic movement in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Judaism, which gave a central sacred role to storytelling and generated both the legends of the Baal Shem Tov and the mystical fairy tales of his great-grandson Nachman of Bratslav; the German Romantic movement, fired by the folkloristic proclamations of Herder and the Brothers Grimm; and the Romantic-nationalist movements that followed the German lead in nearly every country in Europe and the Americas, producing great collections of national and regional folklore and often serving as cultural cover for significant political and social consolidation and change.

In the United States, there was an important if now nearly forgotten revival of storytelling in the 1890s and the first decades of the 1900s that neatly mirrored the storytelling movement at the century’s close. It began in the emerging library and public school systems. Library story hours were established in the Carnegie and New York Public Library systems in the 1890s, and the training of children’s librarians came to include storytelling as an essential vocational skill (Alvey). The National Story Tellers’ League was founded in 1903 by Richard Wyche at a summer school for public school teachers in Knoxville, Tennessee, to promote storytelling in schools. Manuals and inspirational tracts on storytelling as an art form were published by Sarah Cone Bryant, Marie Shedlock, Wyche, and others, all recommending folktales, fairy tales, and literary fairy tales by the likes of Hans Christian Andersen, Oscar Wilde, or Howard Pyle, and biblical stories,

Arthurian legends, and Greco-Roman myths. Storytelling was regarded as an important resource for settlement schools, which were being established in urban areas to serve the children of burgeoning immigrant populations, as well as in isolated rural areas such as the southern Appalachians.

Both these institutions, libraries and schools, provided secular vocational paths for passionate, idealistic young adults, primarily female. They served an urgent social purpose, namely the socialization of poor children to the cultural norms of the literate middle class. It is suggestive of the implicit agendas of this storytelling movement (and their eventual fulfillment, diversion, or cancellation) that its fervor began to wane in the 1920s in synchrony with laws granting women the vote (1919) and restricting immigration (1924). Yet its accomplishments were to create institutional bases for organized storytelling in the United States and northern Europe—albeit in primarily book-centered, oral interpretive contexts—which were in place and ready to support resurgences of fervor around the art at the end of the century.

In 1973, in a small town on the edge of the Blue Ridge Mountains, a festival was organized that became a focus for such a resurgence. The National Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough, Tennessee, offered safe haven to young women and men fresh from the countercultural movements of the 1960s, hungry for a cultural vehicle that promised reconciliation, social connectedness, and artistic healing. Over the succeeding decades, performers and listeners have been drawn to the festival and others like it around the United States, Canada, and Western Europe. Many of the tellers have discovered storytelling independently, sometimes in the earlier contexts of community oral traditions, library work, or teaching, but more often as voyagers from related art forms, such as theatrical impersonation, oral interpretation, performance poetry, mime or New Vaudeville, stand-up comedy, singer/songwriting, or folk music. They came together in Jonesborough and similar sites under a banner of a revival of oral tradition; yet, like many a crusade or parade banner, it served to camouflage even as it exalted the diversity of backgrounds and motives beneath it.

At the outset at least, revival storytelling repertoires have been dominated by folktales and fairy tales, often buttressed by Freudian, Jungian, or Campbellian cross-cultural interpretive frameworks (see Psychological Approach). Traditional tellers with distinctive community repertoires of wonder tales, such as Ray Hicks in the United States, Joe McNeil in Canada, and Duncan Williamson in Scotland, have had formative influences on storytelling revival performers and repertoires; and many important younger tellers, such as Diana Wolkstein, the late Jackie Torrence, Laura Simms, and the English teller Ben Hagerty have based their careers at least initially on the telling of folktales (though recent festival repertoires in the United States have been increasingly dominated by personal memoir). In part this renaissance of folktale telling was due to these stories' easy

identification with tradition and their naturalness in solo and small group performance; but it may also owe to the fact that the form of the wonder tale as described by Joseph Campbell or Vladimir Propp uncannily mirrors the process of a revitalization movement itself.

Wallace described periods of increasing individual or communal stress (separation), followed by a revealed vision of a new way of life (initiation), often based on earlier, forgotten forms and rituals. These revitalizing breakthroughs lead to the creation of organizations, such as the National Story Tellers' League or the National Storytelling Network, to communicate the new path and assimilate it into existing social forms (return). Revival storytellers tend to see themselves as heroes or heroines of their own wonder tale quests, with storytelling as the magical gift enabling them to vanquish the glass mountain of alienated labor, and to make a meaningful living from their art in order to live "happily ever after." Regardless of the status of the ever after, storytelling as a potential of human expression promises to remain with us for as long as we remain human.

Joseph Daniel Sobol

See Also Animal Tale; Epic; Folktale; Legend; Myth; Oral-Formulaic Theory; Oral Tradition.

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Structuralism

Various methods of analysis based on the reduction of phenomena into cognitive models referred to as *structures*. It is probably best to approach the term *structuralism* through an attempt to understand the concept of *structure* within this theoretical point of view. Traditionally, the major problem with the term *structure* has been its concreteness. The word typically refers to phenomena or entities (e.g., buildings) that are quite physical in their essence. Needless to say, structures in structuralism are neither concrete nor physical. Rather, such structures are mental models built after concrete reality. Furthermore, these models are not obvious but demand an understanding of hidden or deep aspects of the matter at hand. Following this approach, structuralism is an attempt to build models that can help understand or, as structuralists would put it, explicate the materials at hand.

The most difficult aspect of structuralism is that these structures are not based on concrete or physical phenomena as they are in biological or other sciences but on cultural realities, such as kinship organization or mythologies. These structures and their structuralist models exist only in human minds and not in nature as, for example, a Marxist would claim.

The ranks of the structuralists include Ferdinand de Saussure, Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, and Claude Lévi-Strauss. It is even possible to claim that some important social and/or psychological theoreticians and certain sciences are structuralist in character because they build models of psychological or social reality. This seems to be particularly true of Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx. But a distinction is made between what may be called “surface structure” (consciousness, superstructure) and “deep structure” (unconscious, infrastructure). It is also worth noting that structuralists claim that to understand the surface structure, one has to understand the deep structure and the ways in which it influences the surface structure. Of all the structuralists, undoubtedly the best known and most influential is Lévi-Strauss.

Structuralism, however, is not a unified school or methodology; Lévi-Strauss does not have a monopoly on structural studies in anthropology or other disciplines. Furthermore, the work done by structuralists is extensive, diverse, and difficult. However, because of Lévi-Strauss’s influence, his work may serve as an example of structuralist approaches in general. In anthropology, the use of the concept of structure is far older than Lévi-Strauss; A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, George Peter Murdock, and many others have used the term in different ways. But it is important to note that Lévi-Strauss’s work is multifaceted and that he was influenced not only by other anthropologists but also by linguists, geologists, and others. Lévi-Strauss brings into anthropology these and other influences that have shaped his thinking and anthropological thought through his work. The main

aspects of Lévi-Strauss's work can be summarized under three headings: (1) alliance theory, (2) human mental processes, and (3) structural analysis of myth.

Alliance Theory

Alliance theory stresses the importance of marriage in society as opposed to the importance of descent. Its basic supposition is that the exchange of women between groups of related men results in greater social solidarity and that the product of this cohesion is a greater chance of survival for all members of the resultant kin group. Lévi-Strauss claims that the regulating of marriages through prescription and preference and the proscription of other types of marriage create an "exchange" of women in simple societies. This, accompanied by exchanges of gifts, ensures the cooperation of the members of these groups.

His analysis of the incest taboo is seminal. For Lévi-Strauss, the link between nature and culture in humankind comes from this universal proscription. In the incest taboo, nature transcends itself and creates culture as the controlling element of human behavior. Sex and other drives are regulated by culture; humankind has become a cultural entity.

Human Mental Processes

There is unity in the way the human mind functions. Lévi-Strauss claims that, although the manifestations may be very different, the human mental processes are the same in all cultures. The unity of the mental processes results from the biology and operations of the human brain. As a result of this unity, for example, the classification of the universe by "primitive man" has the same basis as classifications by any other groups—through models. The fact that resultant models of this classification may be different is irrelevant for him. The analysis of myth in Lévi-Strauss's work also is based on the premise of the unity of the human mind.

Structural Analysis of Myth

Lévi-Strauss's work on myth parallels his interest in mental processes; he attempts to discover the unconscious regularities of the human mind. The use of the structuralist models of myth allows for the reduction of material studied to manageable levels. The dominant manner to accomplish this goal is based on the use of the following concepts: (1) surface and deep structure, (2) binary oppositions (culture/nature), and (3) mediation.

To discover the model/structure of a myth, one must explore the myth's deep structure. The surface structure provides us with the narrative, but the deep structure gives us an explication of the myth. This is accomplished by discovering the major binary opposition(s) in the deep structure.

Binary oppositions occur in nature and, naturally, in the human mind. They are such things as night and day, left and right, or nature and culture. Nature and culture often function as a binary opposition in tales. However, depending on the tale or myth, the binary opposition changes. For example, the binary opposition life and death is useful in explicating *Sleeping Beauty*. Here, the deep structure of the story suggests that when the thirteenth fairy declares that Sleeping Beauty is to die at her fifteenth birthday, a life-versus-death binary opposition is posited. A mediation to solve the problem is now necessary.

A binary opposition can be mediated by finding a solution to the opposition created by the binary. The mediation to the culture/nature binary opposition is that culture transcends nature. In the case of *Sleeping Beauty*, the nature of the mediation is quite different but equally embedded within the subject matter. Here, the life-versus-death binary opposition is mediated by the twelve fairies' actions: Death is transformed into a hundred-year sleep.

In *Sleeping Beauty* or in any myth, the deep structure of the narrative is analyzed through the discovery of a binary opposition and the resultant mediation. This process may, in itself, create new binary oppositions in the story that need to be followed until one arrives at a final mediation for the narrative.

Structuralism is an intellectual movement that bases its analyses on the reduction of materials into models referred to as structures. These structures are not concrete manifestations of reality but cognitive models of reality. Lévi-Strauss stresses that all cultures (not just scholars) understand the universe around them through such models and that humankind comprehends the world on the basis of these mental structures.

Mark Glazer

See Also Linguistic Approach; Semiotics.

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Style

Textual pattern or the exploitation of available patterns within given contexts. The concept of *style* and the scholarly pursuit devoted to its study, *stylistics*, are slippery intellectual commodities. A positive assessment of their characteristics might describe such patterns as multifaceted; in less optimistic terms, they might be called indefinable. With regard to the description and analysis of this complex phenomenon, folklorists might be wise to be guided by important developments in linguistic stylistics, although not all the concerns of value to the student of language in this respect are also of interest to the investigators of folk culture. For example, of the three types of style that Donald C. Freeman highlights—style as deviation from the norm, style as recurrence or convergence of textural pattern, and style as a particular exploitation of the grammar of possibilities—the first is clearly inapplicable in the absence of any normative element in folk culture, the second has limited applicability but cannot be discarded altogether, and the third would appear to be of special significance in the study of the variety and range of actualizations of the “grammar” of tradition. Or, as John Spencer puts it, “a writer’s style may be regarded as an individual and creative utilization of the resources of language which his period, his chosen dialect, his genre and his purpose within it offer him.” Substitute storyteller, singer, fiddle player, potter, house builder, or weaver for writer and tradition/folk culture for language, and this statement could easily have been made by a folklorist. Add the notion of *usage*, as the sum of individual or particular “utilizations,” and we find ourselves beneficially borrowing ideas from yet another area of language study—sociolinguistics—which has, as one of its focal interests, the study of variation or variants, which also goes to the heart of practically every manifestation of folklore ever investigated.

As has often been pointed out with justification, folklorists have, in the past, paid comparatively little attention to matters of style, except for students of folk narrative who have, in some measure, investigated the performance style of storytellers or the style of given texts. A notable exception is Max Lüthi who, in his overview of the form and nature of the European folktale, devotes a whole chapter to what he terms the “abstract style of the folktale,” which, for him, is a concept that goes far beyond mere linguistic considerations. It was not until 1980, however, that the question of “appropriateness” was added to the study of “usage” by W. F. H. Nicolaisen, opening the door for yet another sociolinguistic

concept—that of *register*, which refers to the use of language appropriate to any given situation, especially with regard to the kind of people present on the occasion. This seems to be a useful concept to replace the older notion of “levels of culture”—elitist, normative, folk, primitive—with its hierarchical implications and lack of accommodation for dynamic cultural features. Going beyond the basic consideration of stylistic elements, the “folk cultural register” (in contrast to other cultural registers) thus becomes the appropriate behavioral response, the right kind of action, under those circumstances in which a traditional tale might be told, a folksong sung, a fiddle tune played, or a rug woven, and it emerges as the register in which artists, creators, and virtuosi are allowed full realization of their creative powers within the bounds of tradition and within the shelter of the group. The concept of register acknowledges that most of us—one might be tempted to say all of us—operate in several different registers from time to time and from place to place, and there is not and never has been any place or niche in society that has been “folk” through and through.

W. F. H. Nicolaisen

See Also Performance; Text.

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Supernatural/Supranormal

The entities, beings, or other phenomena that form, control, and manifest humanity’s ultimate concerns, those that are believed to be beyond human control but that can be experienced in ritual encounters and within other supranatural spheres of activity or circumstances.

Many theories of religion point out that the belief in a supernatural order is a sign *of* religion rather than a criterion *for* it. Religions usually use a power or powers beyond this world as a reference point—that is, the fundamental questions regarding humanity and its place in the universe are answered by projecting them against a supernatural background. This supernatural realm is populated by a variety of beings whose existence is manifested by various means cross-culturally.

The affective level of religiosity is particularly manifested in man's experiences with the supernatural. The difference between the definitions given by an official religion and those derived from individual perceptions is crucial. Such a distinction is necessary because experiences and the reporting thereof are products not only of religious myths, dogmas, and values but also of the individual idiosyncrasies that influence perception and interpretation, as well as the social situations that condition perception, interpretation, and other relevant dimensions of behavior.

Supernatural experiences may be classified as casual or ritual encounters with supernatural beings. A casual encounter generally is unexpected and, thus, surprising in nature. The experiencer feels he or she is both at the mercy of a supernatural being and the focus of its actions. Often, fright ensues, along with the realization that the experience is somehow "abnormal." Usually, the person flees and, in distress, resorts to some incantation, prayer, or other protective rite.

The elements of surprise and fright are lacking from ritual encounters. Here, a *Homo religiosus*, a religious person, seeks contact with the supernatural by means of traditional ritual formulas. For example, the fisher may offer a part of the first spring catch to the water spirit, the herder may sacrifice a cow's first calf to the spirit of the cow shed, or the residents of a household in mourning may take offerings of food to the graveside of the deceased. In these cases, believers are the subject of the activity, not the object. They command the ritual techniques needed and know beforehand how to act and why. The appearance of the supernatural being or some other influence exerted by it is believed to be favorable and thus serves a positive social function.

Traditions concerning casual encounters are transmitted primarily through memorates, whereas more formal ritual descriptions and incantations provide sources of information about ritual encounters with supernatural beings.

Juha Pentikäinen

See Also Assault, Supernatural; Belief, Folk; Religion, Folk.

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Superorganic Theories

Postulates that hold culture at a unique level above the individualistic and the social. The perceiving of culture as a superorganic entity presupposes that although culture is created by human beings, it functions at a level above and beyond the individualistic organic and social levels of human existence. However, arguments on behalf of continuity between the organic (psychological), the social, and the cultural have led to reinforcement of racist ideologies. Within European anthropological schools, especially British social anthropology, that continuity was taken to mean that clearly superior cultures or nations (with technologically advanced bases, as those of civilized colonial Western powers) would necessarily be products of superior societies and, consequently, superior psyches (minds or individuals); coupled with the evolutionary doctrine of the survival of the fittest, this was also taken as justification for imperial European policies toward colonized peoples at the stages of so-called savagery and barbarism. This ideology coincided with the independent introduction of the psychoanalytic approach to the study of culture and society, which, along with similar psychological notions, comprised an influential trend in the study of humankind at the beginning of the twentieth century. Among anthropologists in the United States, a reinterpretation of the superorganic concept took place, and the postulated continuities among the organic, the social, and the superorganic (i.e., cultural) were to be negated. American cultural anthropology developed in contradistinction to British social anthropology.

The psychoanalytic approach to the study of culture has been attacked on theoretical grounds. The problem is a philosophical one, considering the ontological aspects of culture regarding allied levels of human activities, such as the psychological, social, and cultural. In 1911, Franz Boas observed that the social or cultural phenomenon is “in its very essence” nonindividualistic. He argued further that the explanation of cultural phenomena in terms of innate biological differences leads to the assumption that the whole problem of the development of culture is reduced to the study of psychological and social conditions, among other factors such as the effects of the natural environment.

Boas’s criticism of the psychological treatment of culture as reductionism was persuasively expressed by Alfred Kroeber, one of his disciples. Kroeber’s theory

Mentifact

A constituent of culture that exists primarily in the minds of the adherents of that culture. As a classificatory concept, the term *mentifact* overlaps with covert culture, or aspects of culture that are not directly observable, and nonmaterial culture, or aspects of culture that are not expressed via solid matter (e.g., stone, wood, ink). The term mentifact has been loosely applied to designate mentalistic, intellectual facts (e.g., sheer knowledge), as well as affective experiences involving feeling (e.g., biologically determined emotions, as well as learned sentiments).

The term emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century as part of the debate over the nature of culture in relation to humanity, and the introduction of the idea of culture as superorganic. Culture was perceived as referring to both the process of learning, or human self-cultivation (enculturation), and the resultant product of that process. Human beings, it was argued, cultivate not only their own natural potentialities but also the physical objects of the natural environment in which they live. Consequently, individuals invent instruments for the better satisfaction of their needs; these constitute a second class of cultural products, namely, artifacts. Since these objects or artifacts exist independently of their human inventors, all such culture products were designated, in Herbert Spencer's term, superorganic.

Two additional categories of superorganic products of the cultural process were identified: mentifacts and socifacts. The first word was introduced to label conceptual symbols comprising such products of culture as language, morals, aesthetics, religious ideals, intellectual aspects of scientific research, and similar mental phenomena. The second word labels aspects of social interaction within a community, such as social norms and organizations that serve to regulate the conduct of individuals within society, as well as the conduct of society as a whole in relation to other societies.

The sum total of the artifacts, socifacts, and mentifacts that comprise superorganic culture, it has been argued, constitutes the surplus resulting from cultural life. This total is commonly referred to as a given society's "social heritage" or "cultural capital."

Hasan El-Shamy

of the superorganic explained cultural phenomena without reducing culture to the plane of purely psychic activities and products. In 1917, Kroeber argued that mentality relates to the individual and that the social or cultural is, in its very essence, nonindividualistic; consequently, heredity has nothing to do with civilization (or culture). Contrary to Herbert Spencer's views, Kroeber denied that the three levels of human existence—the individual, the social, and the cultural—were linked together and maintained the complete disparity of biological and cultural evolution. For Kroeber, "the dawn of the social is not a link in any chain, not a step in a path, but a leap to another plane."

Thus, Kroeber contended, psychology could not be used to investigate the phenomena or measure the dimensions of culture, which he regarded as “the superpsychic product of special mental process.” In other words, explaining such cultural phenomena as the mythology of a nation or the songs of an ethnic group in psychoanalytic terms of the ego and the subconscious would be as meaningless as measuring weights in feet and inches and distance in pounds and ounces. Culture is to be understood exclusively in terms of culture.

In folklore scholarship, efforts to account for the origin and stability of folklore—apart from the individual—seem to have grown without any contact with the concepts of European or American superorganicism. Among folklorists, awareness of the theoretical arguments concerning the superorganic is due to the influence of David Bidney, a passionate disciple of Kroeber, on his own students of folklore at Indiana University (e.g., Alan Dundes, Hasan El-Shamy, and Dan Ben-Amos, among others). Many arguments seemed to speak, wittingly or unwittingly, of folkloric processes in what may be characterized as superorganic terms.

One theory with a pronounced superorganic rationale is that of the “Epic Laws of Folk-Poetry,” proposed by the Danish folklorist Axel Olrik and presented in 1908. Olrik postulated stylistic and structural laws to determine the conditions and aspects of the *Sagenwelt* (a label he applied to a category of folklore, that is, the verbal and narrative). The basic unit in this “epic world” is the *Sage* (or folk story, which may belong to one of a variety of literary genres, ranging from the epic to the *Märchen* or fairy tale). Among Olrik’s “laws” are the following:

1. The “Law of Opening” and the “Law of Closing,” which result in moving from calm to excitement and from excitement to calm; consequently, the *Sage* does not begin with sudden action and does not end abruptly.
2. The “Law of Repetition,” which allows folk literature to compensate for the lack of techniques producing full-bodied detail through various sorts of repetition. By contrast, academic literature employs many means of producing “emphasis, means other than repetition.” Thus, in European folk literature, we encounter the “Law of Three,” whereas in Indic stories, it is “Law of Four.”
3. The “Law of Two to a Scene.”
4. The “Law of Contrast,” according to which the *Sage* is always polarized and opposites or different but complementary qualities exist side by side.
5. The “Law of the Importance of Initial and Final Positions,” which contributes to the “Unity of Plot.”
6. The “Law of Concentration on Leading Character,” which is, for Olrik, “the greatest law of folk traditions.”

According to these laws, the *Sagenwelt* is completely autonomous of psychological and social forces. Thus, the human bearer (or composer) is simply an instrument through which these narratives express themselves.

In recent anthropological theory, a similar view was expressed by Claude Lévi-Strauss along morphological lines of thought concerning myth. He asserted that “man does not think himself through myths, but myths think themselves through man.”

Another folkloristic postulate based on “superorganic” views is André Jolles’s *einfache Formen* (simple forms), presented in 1930. Jolles claimed autonomy of origin, function, form (structure), and existence for certain folklore genres through language. As Jolles saw it, “The entire work, which fulfills itself [via] peasants, hand-workers, and priests, fulfills itself once more in language.” Once this product of “peasants,” “hand-workers,” and “priests” enters a language, it is re-created by that language, language re-creating what life has produced.

For Jolles, the “simple forms” (religious legend, legend, myth, riddle, saying, *case/Kasus*, memorate, fairy tale, and joke) were formed not by human agents but by language, which extracts events from life and re-creates them as independent entities. Thus, folklore—through language—becomes an autonomous, abstract, cultural process *sui generis*, requiring no reference to social or psychological conditions for an explanation of its origin, development, or existence.

Clearly, superorganicism, on the one hand, and psychological, sociological, contextual, performance interpretation and analysis of materials, on the other, are mutually exclusive.

Whether the superorganicism in these and similar folklore theories is systemic or merely coincidental is not always overtly expressed. Human perception tends to be animistic; personification, or the speaking of inanimate objects and abstract concepts or forces as if human, is an outcome of such a perception. Academic arguments typically speak of how culture diffuses or migrates, how ideas meet, and so on. Actually, cultures do not diffuse or migrate, but human beings spread culture and carry cultural components from one place to another; also, cultures do not meet, but individuals who bear certain ideas get together and interact accordingly.

It is in this semantic vein of the predominantly animistic personification of culture and its products that certain folkloristic arguments may be judged as superorganic. Yet one significant folklore theory that is decidedly founded on nonsuperorganic factors has unjustifiably been judged superorganic because of its animistic title: “The Law of Self-Correction,” formulated by Walter Anderson.

Hasan El-Shamy

See Also Audience; Epic Laws; Evolutionary Theory; Psychoanalytic Interpretations of Folklore; Worldview.

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T

Tale Type

A narrative plot identified by a name and a concise description of its contents. When defining a tale type, a folklorist presents an outline of the main events of a number of narrative texts resembling each other. For example, the stories depicting the imprisonment of two children in a witch's or devil's house and their clever escape represent the tale type "The Children and the Ogre"; its main sequences of action are "arrival at ogre's house," "the ogre deceived," and "escape."

Generally, the tale type is provided with a signifying label. The code number of "The Children and the Ogre" is AT 327 in Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson's international folktale index.

The tale type is always an abstract construction. The scholar's generalization is based on several concrete text variants or versions of the plot. Variants that closely resemble each other can be categorized as subtypes. The practitioners of the historic-geographic method have called the subtypes *redactions*. If only known in a particular region or an ethnic group, a tale type or its subtype can be called an *oikotype*.

The notion of the tale type (compare ballad type, rune, or byliny type) appeared in folkloristic discourse as early as the nineteenth century. Faced with the tasks of organizing collections of manuscripts and publishing anthologies, scholars had to identify and list recurring narrative plots and their variants. Several plots proved to be international. For example, "The Children and the Ogre" was recorded not only in German (as "Hansel and Gretel") but also in Scandinavia and Finland.

The Finnish folklorist Antti Aarne analyzed a vast number of Finnish, Danish, and German folktale texts in the early twentieth century. On the basis of this corpus, he defined 540 European tale types and published them in 1910 in his *Verzeichnis der Märchentypen* (Types of the folktale). The American scholar Stith Thompson enlarged Aarne's international index twice, in 1928 and 1961. In the latter revision, the number of folktale types exceeds 1,000. Aarne and Thompson's tale-type index provides information about "the folk-tales of Europe, West Asia, and the lands settled by these peoples." The work covers the following narrative genres with their subgenres: animal tales, magic (fairy) tales, novellas (romantic tales), and jokes.

Tale-type indexes are highly valuable. Using the indexes, a scholar can examine a certain narrative from a cross-cultural perspective. Regional indexes also

offer an ample overview of a given culture's narrative tradition and its key themes in a concise form. Examples of regional type indexes are *The Types of the Norwegian Folktale* (edited by Ornulf Hodne) and *A Type and Motif Index of Japanese Folk-Literature* by Hiroko Ikeda. The concept of the tale type involves both empirical and theoretical problems. Foremost among the empirical problems is the issue of the universality of Aarne and Thompson's "international" tale types. Because these types were defined on the basis of tales collected in Europe and neighboring regions, their applicability when describing non-European tales is often limited. Examples of type indexes in which Aarne and Thompson's categorizations and plot definitions have been discarded are Lee Haring's *Malagasy Tale Index* and Patricia P. Waterman's *A Tale-Type Index of Australian Aboriginal Oral Narratives*.

As a theoretical reservation, it is useful to remember that the definition of tale types depends on the scholar's understanding of the semantics of the narratives and his or her interpretation of what kind of similarities (*homologies*) and differences appear in the texts. Thus, "scientific" or purely objective definitions and classifications of folktales are hard to attain.

The most articulate and insightful critics of the concept of the tale type were the Russian formalists Vladimir Propp and A. I. Nikiforov in the 1920s. According to Propp and Nikiforov, narrators do not rely on single, fixed plots to produce their tales. Instead, storytellers have a collection of episodes, sequences of events, and minor elements (*motifs*) at their disposal, and they use these components to fabricate their tales during narrative performances.

In later studies on storytellers and extensive text materials, scholars have reached a diplomatic solution concerning the problem of the stability of tale types by recognizing at least two ways of producing tales. The storyteller may use a well-known plot as the basic structure of his or her tale, or the narrator may create a new plot by combining traditional and individual elements.

Satu Apo

See Also Folktale; Magic Tale; Motif; Oikotype/Oicotype.

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Text

The basic "object" of folklore research. Folklore texts can be recorded (and preserved) by using a variety of writing implements, electromagnetic or visual facilities, and other media. It is hardly possible to offer a definition for the term *text* in the study of folklore that is not ambiguous. If, for instance, the target of the research is diachronic, the texts that seem to unveil something of the earlier history of the phenomenon under research would be regarded as relevant. From the synchronic perspective, the requirements would concern the usefulness of the texts for the analyses of folklore as incorporated into living human interaction. There is no doubt that a text written in shorthand from a singer in the nineteenth century and a text recorded in a performance situation by means of modern technology are both folklore texts. The problem is whether there is a point of departure, according to which we may judge some texts as objects of research that ought to be regarded as more (or less) valuable than others.

The variety of criteria established for folklore texts arises from diverse methodological frameworks, and very often, research practice is a result of following axioms based on the scientific practices or dominant paradigms currently in fashion. A range of problems surround the concept of text in folkloristics.

To fulfill the demands of proper research as construed during the dominant period of the historic-geographic school, scholars were required to develop the complete body of text variants in their studies, taking into account the time and place of collection for each text and all available information on the tradition carrier's background. This was justified on the assumption that the geographic or

typological distribution of the preserved texts would reveal the prehistory of the texts and that some texts might work as a “codex unicus,” a unique and most original version, having a key importance. In the beginning of the twentieth century, the adherents of the historic-geographic school strove to reconstruct *metatexts*, *archetypes*, or *invariants*. Thus, for example, the typology of folktales proposed by Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson was originally based on the assumption that each type had a prehistory and an archetype. It is necessary, however, to note that variants assigned to the same typological category are not necessarily genetically dependent on one another. Furthermore, such a taxonomy cannot fully accommodate the constant variation of a living tradition. In practice, numerous codes are needed simultaneously for classifying the majority of folktale texts, and new types to which no existing codes apply are always being discovered.

In the structural analysis of folktales, or *morphology*, developed by the Russian formalist Vladimir Propp, the structure of the text consists of a syntagmatic order of narrative units called *functions*. For Propp, unlike many later structuralists or structurally oriented folklorists (e.g., Alan Dundes), the bias was diachronic, as the final purpose of the analysis was to reveal the archetype of folktales and the myth forming the original basis of this archetype. Propp’s analysis of narrative was synchronic since he used a corpus consisting of 100 folktales and aimed at establishing the syntagmatic system of invariant functions of folktales on the basis of this corpus.

The French structuralists, by contrast, concentrated on deep structures of the narrative. In his analysis of myths, Claude Lévi-Strauss segmented the corpus into basic units called *mythemes* and attached these units into a paradigmatic matrix in order to extract the fundamental meanings of the myth. Algirdas Julien Greimas also strove to determine an abstract deep structure, which, according to him, might be exposed from beneath every narrative text.

Later, scholars who advocated the functionalistic paradigm rejected the value of texts dating from the nineteenth century or earlier, regarding them as dead artifacts; it was argued by folklorists such as Kenneth Goldstein and Linda Dégh that those texts were not collected in a natural social context (the proper context of functioning of the folklore in society) but in artificial situations. Folklore texts, according to Roger Abrahams, were regarded as folklore only if actually performed, and the folklore discipline was redefined (most notably by Dan Ben-Amos) as artistic communication in small groups. Suddenly, there was living folklore all around us: workplace lore, various contemporary tales, legends and anecdotes, rumors, gossip, graffiti, parodies on proverbs and riddles, the abundant children’s tradition, jokes, tall tales and jests, and marketplace lore, for example. The springs of folklore texts certainly do not show any signs of running dry, despite the fact that scholars at the end of the nineteenth century felt everything of any importance already had been collected. The questions of where, when, and

from whom the text originated were no longer regarded as sufficient. It was possible to discern active and passive tradition bearers, the event of performance, and the communication process; the whole context became important. The problem of how to define the context and how to cope with the text/context dichotomy arose—a concern that continues even now.

Consequently, many of the synchronically oriented approaches to textual analysis in folkloristics have been influenced since the 1970s by text linguistics, by sociolinguistics, and subsequently, by discourse analysis. During the development of text linguistics, the notions of context and the communicative function were emphasized as a counterbalance to the abstract models created by structuralists (such as Propp, Lévi-Strauss, and Greimas) or in opposition to the generative transformational theory developed by Noam Chomsky, based on the analysis of separate texts without context. The main bias of sociolinguistics is the use of language in social contexts as an empirical object of research. Text linguistics and sociolinguistics gave new impetus to folkloristics, and the birth of the performance (and contextual) school is, in many ways, connected with the development of modern linguistics and the sociologically oriented analysis of discourse. Through the approaches mentioned earlier, the social variation of texts becomes an important object of study. One of the key notions is communicative competence, the ability of the performer to produce texts (e.g., of a given genre) coherently and to relate them to the situation of performance, audience, and other elements of context.

Many other approaches have stressed the importance of the performance situation. Milman Parry and Albert Lord suggested that the performers of epic texts did not reproduce their poems as complete entities drawn from memory but used instead an internalized system of poetic devices of *oral-formulaic technique*, providing the basic tools (formulas, themes, and story patterns) for the production of folk poetry that varied from one performing situation to another (composition in performance). According to John Miles Foley, formulas and story patterns function not so much as compositional conventions but as cognitive immanent categories. One important branch influenced by oral tradition studies is the orality-literacy discussion and the theories of development (and coexistence) of orality, writing, and print.

The *ethnopoetic* approach has focused on revealing narrative patterns reaching from the level of stylistic features and other formal elements of surface structure up to the overall meaning structures or focused on transcription systems of recorded performances in order to visualize such “paralinguistic” meaningful features as pitch, quality of voice, loudness, or pause, for example.

One of the key issues in the debate concerning folklore texts is the notion of *genre*. The concept of genre and the practice of dividing folklore texts into a system of genres (e.g., for purposes of classification) have been among the fundamental

functional tools used in the analysis of folklore. The majority of the genre terms used by folklorists are devised by researchers and refer to concepts aiming at universal use (e.g., in archives). From the point of view of the producer (performer) and the receiver (audience) of folklore, genres, however, are not, in themselves, important, and they are not recognized as systems. In analyzing folklore texts as genres, we are, in fact, analyzing the means of expression of different channels available to folk culture for describing, interpreting, or explaining life and the environment. Genre should not be an analytical fossil constructed by researchers and existing outside the realm of living folklore. If, for example, a commonly used archive classification does not seem to apply to the folklore of some ethnic minority or other special group, researchers should take heed of classifications to be found in the culture in question.

The processes of creating, collecting, and recording folklore texts are taking place in constantly changing sociohistorical, cultural, and political settings. For this reason, the texts are not products of arranging symbolic objects in any stable content, order, or structure having fixed meanings; rather, they constitute a multi-dimensional and multilevel network of forms of manifestation and interdependences. The different types of discourse and genres and the pertinent elements of texture serve the purpose of making distinctions, enabling the suitable choice in the jumble of possible realizations in a given situation.

During the history of folkloristics, folklore texts have been exposed to a methodological cross fire. A productive synthesis is needed. Since the 1960s, the integration of various approaches has yielded promising results in the study of folklore texts: structuralism, oral-formulaic theory, ethnopoetics, cognitive sciences, computer analysis, sociolinguistics and discourse analysis, the notions of folkloristic variation and intertextuality, and studies on gender and power.

The field is open to fruitful discussion, but the era of rigid axioms has not yet, it seems, come to an end. The biggest problem concerning future prospects for research on folklore texts appears to be how to prevent fruitless, authoritative discourse according to which only the approach presented by a given scholar or a dominant school or paradigm is the one leading to the “truth.”

Lauri Harvilahti

See Also Literary Approach.

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Textiles

Cultural products of cloth. Often regarded as creative objects subject to the imagination and ingenuity of a community of creators, textiles reveal much about stylistic choice and the aesthetics of experience based on local ways of being creative. They are also practical objects. In the domestic realm, textiles cover floors, walls, furniture and people. They not only offer warmth and material comfort but also symbolize personal, ethnic, regional and national identities through artistic methods (weaving, sewing, plaiting, etc.) and the use of decorative motifs. The iconography of each textile is frequently based on symbolic patterning and is imbued with cultural meaning extending through space and time. Textiles have the capacity of “diffusing mythology into daily life” (St. George 2006).

In terms of creativity and construction, folklorists examine the range of inventive processes associated with textile making to determine the degree that genres such as weaving, bark cloth, felt, pieced quilts, painted fabric, embroidery, and so forth are cultural and social productions as well as technical ones. The notion of the textile as an interactive, performance-conditioned object—that is, a catalyst and agent—is also compelling. As such, it suggests an array of interpretive possibility from the pictorial narrative traditions of Southeast Asian story cloths with their visual portrayal of sequenced life experiences to South Pacific plant fiber cloaks bearing the physical imprint or traces of generations of owners and wearers, which evoke complex stories of lineage, legacy, and dispute. Folklore methodology with its emphasis on tradition, innovation, process, and performance is particularly effective when applied to textile interpretation and to the substantive yet fluid meanings of design patterns shifting within cultural contexts.

The term *textile* derives from *texere*, a Latin verb denoting “to construct,” “to weave,” or “to plait” (to braid). Both *textile* and *text* share this root verb and are linked to the notion of weaving (or composing) a tangible, visual or literary object virtually out of nothing in order to create an aesthetically or culturally

intelligible entity. Folklorists discern cultural meaning from textiles by not only analyzing the way these objects are made but also by assessing how a society continues to regard and represent singular textiles in their narrative repertoire long after the objects have lost their usefulness or immediate relevancy. This is significant for understanding the symbolic power and value of textiles within a group context. For example, today Maori woven cloaks belonging to nineteenth-century chiefs are stored in museum collections out of social circulation. Nevertheless, in Maori oral tradition these cloaks have names. Stories are still recounted with allusions to events belonging to different cloak biographies. Hidden from public view but narratively “alive,” these cloaks can be considered “objects in action.” Stories are told about these objects as well as told in conjunction with these objects. Thus, relative to textiles and material culture, folklorists examine the resonance of objects activated through exchanges among makers, curators, chroniclers, collectors, viewers, and so forth with certain objects. The folklore theory of practice as applied to textiles addresses a range of human-object relations and performances inclusive of conception and production, cultural behavior around objects, social context, cultural discourse, and self-reflexivity.

Folktale Themes

Textile lore appears in many folktales as stories of magical performance and prowess (e.g., magic carpets, cloth of gold, etc.). One dominant theme in European folklore is a belief in clandestine nocturnal spirit helpers who perform tasks of spinning, weaving, and sewing during the night. Other tales narrate stories about naïve and inexperienced characters caught in untenable situations where they must spin, weave, and sew staggering amounts of raw material in record time (e.g., flax into gold). In these tales, dwarfs, supernaturals, and evil outcasts rescue the distressed spinner (weaver, stitcher, etc.) and drive dangerous bargains in exchange for their help. Regarding folklore analysis, textile themes also highlight contemporary cultural attitudes toward textile creation and bestow a kind of agency on textiles relative to human behavior vis-à-vis creativity, social relations, and historical circumstances (Schneider 2006).

Materials and Processes

Textile arts today employ the same materials, methods, and forms as they did in ancient eras. In addition to continuity, another unique characteristic is that textile creation involves creating the essential materials out of which cloth is made unlike carving wood or stone. Thus, fibers for weaving or plaiting are first painstakingly created through other processes such as spinning, scraping, peeling, pounding, and so forth, which involve converting rough, coarse materials into pliant fibrous strands suitable for cloth construction (Schoeser 2003).



A woman spins wool during the International Poncho Day in Nobsa, Colombia, June 21, 2009. Local craftsmen make sheep's wool ponchos using ancestral techniques. (AP/Wide World Photos)

Labor-intensive technologies utilized in fiber preparation and cloth construction are culturally dynamic processes. These encompass familiar techniques of spinning, dyeing, and weaving cotton, wool, and silk, as well as rare artisanal textiles created from layers of inner bark (e.g., flax, hemp, and ramie) and leaf fibers (sisal and raffia). Textile arts of all types are subject to ongoing concerns with artistic and cultural adaptations, innovation, synthesis, hybridity, authenticity, tradition, and change. Wool, cotton, and silk are the most versatile and widespread fibers. Throughout Central Asian areas like Uzbekistan and Turkestan, ancient felting techniques and textile designs in wool and silk exemplify enduring processes of bonding fibers and the artistic viability of patterns inspired by abstracting ancient animistic spirit-based motifs. In terms of current marketplace demands, these textiles have been modified from their original totemic functions to more universal and aesthetic adaptations relative to tourism and international trade.

At one time textiles made from plants comprised a sustainable resource for communities around the world. Nevertheless, many were eventually replaced by the internationalization of commercial trade fabrics and some became obsolete. Due to recent more favorable economic climates for plant fiber textiles, weavers have revived many of the old practices along with a resurgence of cultural pride and artistic identity. Whether vegetal fiber products such as rare Micronesian

banana leaf loincloths and Buddhist ceremonial robes made from the leaf stems of the aquatic lotus plant are historically or iconographically rooted, they are not limited to solely reproducing or replicating cultural identity but also “mediate between self and society in ways that make visible how people reposition themselves in times of dramatic change” (Hamilton and Milgram 2007). By analyzing textile creation in terms of its social, political and religious significance, it is apparent that eclectic identities bound up with cloth production and display are diverse, often fragmented, in flux, and rarely stable. Within the interplay among textile creation, a community’s value system and its history, the evolution and mutability of artistic, cultural and social domains define and determine the main constituents of continuity, change, and creative innovation.

Aesthetics

Folk aesthetics or ethnoaesthetics pertain to a micro-level of artistry in local or regional cultural zones and are grounded in “aesthetics of experience” where art and life are not necessarily separate realities. An internal (insider) understanding of ethnoaesthetics is shared by a community of textile makers and users and is based on personal and group identity, knowledge, and appreciation of technical skill and virtuosity, complexity, customary design concepts, and judgments about symbolically important themes. In Joyce Ice’s study of aesthetics and quilting groups, she emphasizes the social considerations of reaching group consensus about pattern, choice of color, stitching, and so forth as part of the process of collective artistic decision making. The quilt becomes both the social and aesthetic product of this collaborative creative process (Ice 1993).

Sacred and Ceremonial Textiles

For time immemorial textiles have continued to play important ceremonial and symbolic roles. The sacred properties of textiles range all the way from decorative surface embellishments, which attest to the spiritual or social status of the wearer, to the concept of cloth as a container of spirits and ancestral power. Universally, cloth demarcates sacred and secular spaces (e.g., embroidered and appliquéd Ottoman tents and Cook Islands, *tivaevae*, multicolored appliqués used as backdrops for rituals such as weddings and hair-cutting ceremonies). Textiles and cloth are offered as gifts of grace and empowerment, while they also embrace and wrap (marriage veils and shrouds), deflect evil, and absorb an excess of spiritual power (talismanic robes, fabrics of a certain color, and Fijian chief’s mats).

Gender

Worldwide there are variations on gender-based division of artistic labor in the traditional production of textiles. In various geographical locations, women

weave and men decorate and embellish or vice versa. Today, however, the classic dichotomies counterbalancing women's work of weaving and dyeing with men's farming and fighting activities are now scrambled, where women are cultivators, processors, textile artists, innovators, and entrepreneurs. The old prevailing attitude in Indonesia where weaving symbolized the "women's war-path" as paired with men's headhunting battles (loom and spear) is now superseded by the reality and extent of women's multiple roles in commerce, finance, and creative areas of responsibility. Locally produced textiles' popularity in the global marketplace also offers more opportunities to women artists and marketers in distant places. At the same time, the dynamics and asymmetries of globalization shift and realign relationships between marginal or peripheral societies and world trade centers. Global developments figure in folklore theory where questions are asked from the vantage point of a scholarly tradition operating at microlevels of society. These queries are about power of place, centrality, regional, ethnic and national identities, subaltern groups, and social change.

Textile scholarship focuses on the object as agent ("objects in action"), where the engagement with the textile and the action of artistic creativity and its consequences are paramount (Gell 1998). Folklore has long been interested in communication and is ideally suited to explore the communicative power of textiles as well as their function, aesthetics, and performative associations.

Suzanne P. MacAulay

See Also Art, Folk; Material Culture.

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Thompson, Stith

Arguably “the father of American folklore,” Stith Thompson (1885–1976) was for the five decades before his death the best known of American folklorists and the most influential force in the field. One cannot study American folklore without coming across his name innumerable times and always in important contexts.

He was born in Kentucky; attended Butler University, the University of Wisconsin (MA), and the University of California; and earned his PhD from Harvard in 1914. His dissertation, “European Borrowings and Parallels in North American Indian Tales,” was directed by the illustrious George Lyman Kittredge, and the experience was to influence the rest of Thompson’s professional life. Harvard was, at the time, a leading center for the study of folklore in America, and at the time, folklore study was based in the English Department. Kittredge, himself a student and colleague of the ballad scholar Francis James Child, was a distinguished scholar of medieval and Renaissance literature and knowledgeable about folklore. Thompson learned a great deal about those literary areas from his mentor, and his book *The Folktale* (1946) is laced with examples from medieval literature.

Thompson went to Indiana University in 1921 to teach courses in literature and folklore and there began efforts to establish folklore as a university subject. His efforts culminated in the formation of the country’s first folklore PhD program in 1953, and since that time, many distinguished folklore scholars have graduated from Indiana University. Simultaneously, Thompson worked to establish folklore courses and programs at other universities around the country, and from them, as well, other prominent folkloric scholars have been produced. In these ways, he helped established folklore study as a serious American discipline.

During his decades at Indiana University, Thompson edited and saw through publication *The Types of the Folktale* (1964) and the monumental *Motif Index of Folk Literature* (1955–1958). These works alone would have established him as his nation’s leading folklore scholar, but he also published *European Tales among the North American Indians* (1919), *Tales of the North American Indians* (1929), *The Folktale* (1946), and *One Hundred Favorite Folktales* (1968). The influence of his dissertation in several of these volumes is obvious.

Thompson introduced many American folklorists to the theories and methods of analysis being done on the folktale by the Finns, thus introducing the American scholarly community to European folktale scholarship. His lengthy and detailed essay on the Indian “Star Husband Tale” demonstrated the historic-geographic method to an English-speaking North American audience, and his editions of the folktale types and the motif index provided the tools that enable this research to be performed.

When the focus of folklore scholarship shifted in the 1950s away from a study of the folkloric item as text-based entity to the folkloric transmission act as a

communicative event, Thompson's research, his scholarly editions, and his influence began to decline. Nevertheless, his contributions have been enormous; no other American scholar has been as important or as influential.

Warren Roberts

See Also Historic-Geographic Method.

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Tourism

Tourism is an industry or set of linked businesses and infrastructure elements involving distance, geographical destinations, time, resorts, culture change, and human interaction. The essence of tourism, as John Urry (2002) notes, is difficult to grasp because of its multifaceted nature and its connection with a range of contemporary social and cultural processes. It is linked to consumer culture, to transnational movements of people from one part of the world to another for purposes of pleasure and travel, and to global capitalism.

One product of modernization and globalization has been the rise of a new leisure class and its quest for authenticity. Dean MacCannell (1989) conceives of tourism as the modern equivalent of the religious pilgrimage in that both involve looking for authentic experiences. He argues that in its quest for ultimate reality, the modern quest for authenticity resembles the concern for the sacred in traditional societies. Though acknowledging that such a quest is important, Urry rejects the idea of the search for authenticity as the primary motivation for tourism. He suggests instead that the contrast between one's workplace and residence and the tourist experience motivates tourism. Cohen (1984) and Smith (1989) have identified several types of tourists (elite tourists, off-beat tourists, unusual tourists, incipient mass tourists, mass tourists) for whom the question of authenticity does play an important role. Feifer (1985), though, has suggested that the tourist is not "a time traveler when he goes somewhere historic; not an instant noble savage when he stays on a tropical beach; not an invisible observer when

he visits a native compound. Resolutely ‘realistic,’ he cannot evade his condition as outsider.”

Several hypotheses have been developed to explain tourism. Many authors have linked tourism with consumption, while MacCannell sees the tourist as a sort of symbolic cannibal who “consumes not only resources and material goods but the very cultures in which they are located.” Moreover, one of the dangers that tourism may create, according to Coleman and Crang (2002), is the conversion of places, people, and generally the world into something that can be “esthetically” used and consumed. They fear that tourism may transform places into exhibitions. Crick (1989) labels tourists “the sun-tanned destroyers of culture” and questions the positive impact of tourism on customs and the arts in general (including festivals and handcrafted products). Some commentators have seen tourism as a rupture and contaminating plague, which could destroy local customs and pristine places by converting them into commodities.

However, commodification in itself does not necessarily change customs or arts. In fact, in some instances, it may preserve them in the interest of tourism. The image of tourism as a destroyer of customs and arts, which leads to the emergence of what Cohen calls “phony-folk-culture” or to the mass production of cheap souvenirs adapted to tourist’s expectations, is questionable. Tourism has been perceived as producing chains of identical resorts and reducing locals to servants. This negative concept of tourism may be defined as the “McDonaldization” of travel, which tends to homogenize and standardize tourist experiences. Meanwhile, though, more positive results are often neglected. In particular, tourism may generate the development of new local arts or styles. It may rediscover, preserve, and eventually enhance those local arts that modernization has tended to leave behind or forget. Also, workers in the travel business attempting to emphasize local differences in order to create distinctive products and market specificity have tried to correct the tendency to homogenize tourists’ experiences. Rather than looking at transformations engendered by tourism in lifestyle, arts, and customs as merely negative, it is more useful to approach them as another stage in the continuous process of cultural change.

What makes and motivates a tourist? What are the relationships between local “hosts” and tourist “guests”? Is tourism an agent of social change? Early scholars of the anthropology of tourism, such as Louis Turner and John Ash (1975), help to understand tourists’ behavior, though they tend to judge the tourist harshly. Initially, anthropologists studied only the effects of tourism on the host culture. Today, a growing body of research also investigates the interaction between hosts and guests in terms of social and environmental impact. Urry, for instance, contributes to an understanding of how the “tourist gaze” orders and regulates the relationship with the tourist environment. He claims that there are systematic ways of “seeing” what tourists look at. He writes, “When we ‘go away’ we look at the

environment with interest and curiosity. It speaks to us in ways we appreciate, or at least we anticipate that it will do so. In other words, we gaze at what we encounter.” Before they actually travel, tourists tend to have expectations about what should be present at their destinations. They want to see these things when they arrive.

Some case studies use tourist behavior on beaches and at seaside resorts to highlight what Nelson Graburn (1989) calls tourism’s inversions, or the “non-ordinary experience.” Inversions, according to Graburn, are shifts in behavior patterns away from usual norms, which are expressed as temporarily opposite behavior. Tourism, in this sense, serves as a form of escapism (Mazanec 1985) or pleasure seeking, as tourists take advantage of “the opportunity to temporarily become a nonentity, removed from a ringing telephone.” The beach is a site of transgression—a place of license, bodily disclosures, and excess, according to Rojek (1993). At the seaside resort, normality seems to be suspended, the individual liberated from his or her ordinary preoccupations. Life at the beach is experienced as “out of time and place,” as a relaxing existence, separate from the everyday life of the tourist and even of the local population. However, actual tourists differ notably from one another in their motivations, traveling styles, and activities.

The impacts of tourism are enormous not only for whole countries but also for small communities, rural districts, and wilderness areas. Even though it may not be the main source of change in a community, tourism has a role in precipitating or accelerating rapid changes. Tourism may help to revitalize towns and cities with successful strategic marketing plans. Place marketing succeeds when community members derive satisfaction from their community and when visitors and new businesses visit and invest in that area. Community involvement, for instance, has become accepted practice in planning and developing cultural-tourism projects. Most professionals in this field affirm that heritage development depends on high levels of community awareness and understanding. The need to consider the potential impacts of heritage tourism on local cultures and communities before beginning projects has received increasing attention. In fact, one of the major concerns and biggest challenges facing heritage-tourism programs, as reported by the National Trust for Historic Preservation (http://www.nationaltrust.org/heritage_tourism/Services.html), is ensuring that tourism does not destroy the very heritage that attracts visitors. Understanding the need to protect certain local cultural areas from tourist visitation to preserve traditions and quality of life for the inhabitants is demonstrated in the attempt to develop noninvasive tourism. Burn (1999), for instance, cites Stanley Plog, who has elaborated a plan for a better tourism future called “Preserving,” which aims to improve new global-local partnerships.

Tourism remains a complex phenomenon with social, cultural, political, and economic dimensions, and has elicited multidisciplinary interest from researchers,

scholars, and practitioners. Tourism also provides an important tool for examining and interpreting globalization, the most transformative process in the world today. As a mode of travel, communication, visualization, and experience, tourism not only reaches isolated parts of the world but also transforms social life and identity at home. Tourism has become an integral part of all societies, and—perhaps, more importantly—the tourism industry is one of the largest and most dynamic economic forces in the world.

Francesca M. Muccini

See Also Beliefs, Folk; Folk Culture; Folklife.

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Toy, Folk

Play objects, often although not always, rendered in miniature. Toys belong to the realm of fantasy, even though they are material objects. The object may have been created for one purpose, but we only know it is actually a “toy” if we see someone playing with it. Stones can be toys, but clearly not all stones are toys, and dolls certainly can be toys, yet we cannot assume that every small, doll-like human figure is actually a toy. The oldest of what we now recognize as toys—balls, tops, and human doll figures—may have been utilized for magical-religious or healing purposes in one context and then used either for reenactment or for parody when placed in the hands of a child. The separation of the category “folk toy” from “toy” is itself controversial, reflecting basic disagreements over definitions, players, and usage.

Toys as Culture, an elaborate, book-length essay by Brian Sutton-Smith, makes the point that although toys are often thought of as realistic miniatures, they vary from “those which perfectly resemble that which they signify . . . to those which are quite schematic and convey only those salient traits of those objects they signify . . . to those which distort or have little realistic signification whatsoever.” In the popular sense, the toy is considered, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, “a thing of little or no value or importance; a foolish or senseless affair, a piece of nonsense, a material object for children or others to play with (often in imitation of some familiar object); a plaything; also something contrived for amusement rather than for practical use.” However, despite all their divergent views, scholars interested in folk toys would likely contend that the toy is anything but “senseless” or of “no value or importance.” Rather, they would suggest, it is precisely in the small things—such as songs, poems, gestures, and toys—that one sees the larger cultural patterns.

The small but varied literature on folk toys can be divided into three main groups, each giving a different meaning to the term *folk toy*: the historical study

of folk toys as artifacts; the exhibition of specific toy collections primarily consisting of photographic displays, often of specific ethnic groups or regions; and the hidden literature on folk toys, embedded in larger ethnographies. In the first genre of folk toy literature, the historical study of toys as artifacts, the emphasis is on the description of the object and its basic historical context. We can only speculate whether children played with toys or whether the toys they utilized merely did not survive the years like their sturdier adult counterparts did. In the second genre, toys as ethnicity on display, folk toys are seen alongside ritual objects as items made in a specific locale, and the makers of the toys are emphasized. In this view, toys are considered reflective of a specific cultural style or people, and they may be objects for either children or adults. In the third genre of folk toy literature, toys as a part of ethnographic description, folk toys are typically seen as those objects made exclusively by children for children of a specific culture.

In the literature that treats folk toys as artifacts, folk toys are generally hand-made objects and are said to represent the daily life of specific peoples in history. The primary research tools in this literature are archaeological, and the texts are typically comparative. Some conjecture has been made evaluating which miniatures or instruments or dolls were used for recreational purposes and which were employed for religious or magical purposes.

Two classic texts examining toys through time, beginning with antiquity, are Antonia Fraser's *History of Toys* and Max von Boehn's *Dolls and Puppets*. Both Boehn and Fraser warn of confusing ancient dolls and ritual figures, and their pages are filled with photographs of ancient toys from a variety of world museums. Both texts mention the ancient throwballs, dolls, and animal figures found in Egyptian tombs, possibly for the entertainment of the dead, although these were not found in the tombs of children, only adults. Chapters on Greek and Roman toys consistently mention Roman dice, knucklebones, and other games of chance in archaeological finds, although these items also could have been used for divination. It seems that the first record of kite flying was made in China, in 206 BCE when General Han-Sin used kites to measure the distance from his camp to the royal palace. We are left questioning whether these objects were tools or toys or both.

Boehn, because of his focus on a particular type of toy, is able to include pre-historic idols, ancestor images, fetishes, amulets, talismans, funeral images, and mannequins. He then examines the early European doll and dolls in literature and proceeds to the most mobile of dolls: the automata, movable images, and the early puppet shows. Unfortunately, although it is rich with detail, much of the book has an evolutionary tone as the author makes logical leaps about the supposed developmental connections between ancient dolls, "exotic dolls," and the dolls of Western Europe. Fraser, too, links "ancient and primitive playthings"

in a manner unacceptable in modern anthropology and folklore; however, there is much attention to detail in her chapters entitled “Toys of the Greeks and Romans,” “Mediaeval Childhood,” “Toys in the Age of the Renaissance,” and “The Expanding Eighteenth Century World.” “Movable toys” and “optical toys and the juvenile theatre” are also examined, followed by a peek at the beginning of the toy-making industry in the West, with its modern machines.

Throughout the scholarly literature that perceives the toy as artifact, the term *folk toy* is synonymous with *old toy*. Yet ironically, as Antonia Fraser suggests, folk toys in general are transient objects, often constructed from leftover material and not necessarily made to last. Furthermore, the best-loved toys may be too well used to survive as artifacts, whether the toy is the African American corn-husk doll, the Indian ceramic animal, the Japanese rice-paper kite, or the English adventure playground tree house. One could remark that the toys that survive may, in fact, be the ones played with the least, which suggests that we know even less about the history of actual toys than this small literature would indicate.

Folk toy books that represent the toys of one particular culture in pictorial form can be categorized as ethnicity on display. Often, these are books with beautiful pictures and little information; many simply display one particular museum or individual collection. Datta Birendranath’s *Folk Toys of Assam* presents the Indian folk toy in relation to its place of production by organizing the photos and drawings by material, that is, “clay toys,” “pith toys,” and “toys made of bamboo, wood and other materials.” This volume emphasizes the production of the toy and the adult use of the toy for religious or healing rituals. Another fine example of this approach is Emanuel Hercik’s *Folk Toys: Les Jouets Populaires*, which, although it includes many drawings of folk toys throughout Europe in general, emphasizes Czechoslovakian folk toys spanning several centuries. It, like the *Folk Toys of Assam*, is dedicated to the makers of the toys, the artisans as culture bearers, and it leaves readers wondering about the objects’ actual uses or connections to recreation as we know it.

Florence Pettit and Robert Pettit’s *Mexican Folk Toys, Festival Decorations, and Ritual Objects* provides a sharp contrast to the Birendranath and Hercik volumes. *Mexican Folk Toys* places the toy in the larger world of celebratory material culture. The emphasis here is on the production and seasonal display of specific objects. The object as cultural reflection and production here includes Mexican wheeled pottery dating to the first or second century CE and “old traditional flutes” as toys, moving animal toys, jumping jacks made of wood and woven palm leaf rattles, animals, and figurines.

The Treasures of Childhood: Books, Toys, and Games from the Opie Collection represents another attempt to provide a context for toys—the world of English childhood. Unlike the other collections, its emphasis is on toys specifically used by children, and it goes beyond a focus on the toys’ production. The volume

presents childhood as its own subculture, and it leads to a consideration of questions of culturally based definition (i.e., what a toy is) and function (i.e., what a toy's role is in a specific culture).

There is a tension in many of these historical and regional compilations between the universality of the toys as archetypes—balls, tops, dolls, pull toys—and the uniqueness of toys in specific regions. Examples abound of regionalization by image (e.g., toy tigers in India, toy horses in New Mexico), regionalization by material used (e.g., carved ivory animals among the peoples of the far north, cotton and corn dolls among non-nomadic North American native tribes), or regionalization by storyline associated with the local hero toy (e.g., the soldier in England, the miner in Czechoslovakia). There is the implication that the “folkness” of a toy is to be found in its unique regionalization, and there is the further insinuation that it is possible to discern such a distinction between a toy and a folk toy, although these theses are not clearly stated.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in a text based upon an exhibition of world folk toys, attempted to fine-tune a definition of the toy and discover which aspects of toys were universal across cultures. In this picture-focused book, *Toys and Games of Children of the World*, the toys and games are divided into four groupings: “representational” toys and games, toys and games with “skills and rules,” those with a “connection with tradition,” and “present day” toys and games. Although one could make a case for the division of fantasy play-oriented objects from rule-oriented game objects, all have their own “connection with tradition” and the “present day.” Ultimately, the games and toys can be said to be inseparable from their traditions and cultural contexts.



Russian nesting doll, or “Matryoshka” doll. (Vladikpod/Dreamstime.com)

Ethnographies that have specifically examined the toy as part of a larger system are associated with ethnographies of child life or child cultures. These studies promulgate the view of the folk toy as a recreational object made by the children themselves—for developmental, functional purposes. Most significant among the authors writing in this vein is the neo-Freudian Erik Erikson, who, in his collection of essays entitled *Toys and Reasons*, argues that the body is the first toy and that toying and toys are involved with the child's attempt to master the environment in miniature.

Helen Schwartzman's *Transformations: The Anthropology of Children's Play* is an excellent source guide and leads the reader through the culture and personality studies and through comparative classics such as the *Children of Six Cultures: A Psycho-Cultural Analysis*, compiled in 1975 by Beatrice and John Whiting; Cora Dubois' 1944 Indonesian study called *The People of Alor*; T. Centner's 1962 *L'Enfant Africain et ses jeux*; Wayne Dennis's 1940 journal study *The Hopi Child*; and the early works of Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson. In all of these studies, the emphasis is on the understanding of the entire culture of the child in order to examine cross-culturally the relationship of culture to personality in the development of humans. The details about toys may be sparse in any individual work, but each offers insights about the use of such objects in children's cultures—information not found in the first two categories of toy literature. Centner's study of the Bantu-speaking groups includes much on dolls, dollhouses, cars, weaponry, and a seasonal creation of a children's village. Schwartzman refers to Dubois' description of "ingenious" child-made squirt guns made of bamboo, tops, cats' cradles, marbles, and jacks. Dennis, too, has described "ingenious" child-made playhouses constructed of mud and sand, dolls made from found bones, and peach-seed sheep. In all of these examples, the "folk toys" have been made by the players themselves, with little or no guidance from the adults.

One modern American example of a work on folk toys as those made by the children themselves is Simon Bronner's *American Children's Folklore*. In an otherwise generalized text broadly collected across the United States with little ethnic or regional information, there is a wealth of information in a chapter entitled "We Made It Ourselves." Chewing gum wrapper chains, string friendship bracelets, paper fortune-telling squares, and slingshots and tree forts are given as examples of children's own folk toys and constructions, along with diagrams and photographs of the child as toy maker.

As with many other genres of traditional expression, perhaps we should focus not on origin but on issues of use in context to arrive at conclusions regarding the nature of the folk toy. If the child-made ingenious invention travels and is made by adults elsewhere, is it no longer a folk toy? If a hero toy is made by machine from another country but labeled as a local hero, is it not also a folk toy? Fraser and Boehn suggest that machine production and large-scale distribution of toys led to

the disappearance of the folk toy, reinforcing the notion that the term refers to the handmade process distributed locally. But if the German top with Hebrew letters known as a dreidel is made in plastic and by machine in the United States, is it no longer a folk toy? Although some toys are indeed traditional in a certain locale and among a certain group of players, it is only the unused toy—unchallenged by any player and, therefore, divorced from both a performance context and ludic tradition—that may not become an actual folk toy.

Ann Richman Beresin

See Also Childbirth and Childbearing; Children's Folklore; Games, Folk.

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Tradition

Repeated pattern of behaviors, beliefs, or enactment passed down from one generation to the next. Traditions are culturally recognized and sustained; in general, folklorists have maintained a particular interest in those that are orally transmitted. Within the discipline of folklore, the historicity of tradition has been subjected to a variety of interpretations—for example, a set of cultural ideals regarded as a coherent unit in which past ideals influence the present patterns of behavior in the group, a recognized

set of present practices with origins in the past, or a set of practices created in the past that is purposefully maintained by the group in the present.

Thus, the definition of the term *tradition* elicits a variety of responses. One definition would deem tradition as something passed down from one generation to the next, generally by informal means, with little or no change in the transmission of that item or in the item that is transmitted. However, particularly in the latter decades of the twentieth century, many folklorists have asserted that tradition entails a complex set of relationships between the past and the present, in which the past sets precedent for the present and the present reflects the past in its adherence to a particular tradition. *Tradition* is often defined as an adjective in relation to specific genres, such as a “traditional ballad,” “traditional narrative,” or traditional belief,” or in terms of technical use, such as “traditional modes of transmission.” In these and like constructions, tradition is understood as a set of preexisting values and materials particular to a genre, which have been passed from one generation to the next. In the performance of a traditional genre, these preexisting values are of greater importance than the performers’ individual



Día de Los Muertos celebrations have their roots in pre-Columbian Aztec and other native festivals memorializing departed loved ones. The celebration occurs annually on November 1 and November 2, coinciding with the similar Roman Catholic celebrations of All Saints Day and All Souls Day. During the holiday, departed friends and family return from the land of the dead to visit with the living. The living prepare special offerings of food and gifts, which are placed on the family altar, or *ofrendas*, either in the home, in the local parish chapel, or outside the family cemetery. (Zepherwind/Dreamstime.com)

tastes, and judgment of the relative success or failure of the performance is based on these constructs. As folklorist Jan Brunvand asserts, there is a relative fixity of form that causes these art forms to be regarded as traditional.

For the bearers of a particular tradition or set of traditions, the performance establishes a connection between the present group and their predecessors. There is an understanding that a tradition is important with linking the past to the present as a form of identity making. This continuity over time venerates the tradition as something of central importance to the group. Distinct from a custom, for example, a tradition bears the patina of time and takes on something of a near-sacred role within the group's worldview. A seemingly nonsensical activity can be elevated within a group if that activity is classified as a tradition. Markers such as "tradition dictates" or "it's part of our tradition" set the activity described apart from the day-to-day realities of the group and ascribe a special status to it.

Traditions remain recognizable through successive performances, but certain variations within group standards may be allowed. Traditions represent both continuity through time and innovation within particular performances. The continuity (or sedimentation, as it is defined by Paul Ricoeur) manifests itself through the consistently identifiable features within the tradition and its repeated performances. Innovation is manifest in each particular performance, wherein certain deviations from the tradition are allowed and even expected within group normative standards. How long it takes for an item to become a tradition—for sedimentation to produce a consistently identifiable core to the tradition—is subject to the dynamics of the group and the role that particular tradition fills. For a transient group such as college students, a particular cheer, hand gesture, or greeting may become a tradition relatively quickly. In these cases, the rapid turnover rate of group members dictates that the process of tradition creation be accelerated. For other groups, though, the development from simple repetition and handing down of a certain practice or belief into an accepted tradition may take several years, decades, or generations before it is understood and accepted to be a tradition.

Within the scholarly use, traditions represent a core set of traits handed down through succeeding generations, and they often identify and are identified with specific groups. The word *tradition* is used to define and to identify both methods of transmission and specific practices. As such, a definition of the term is based on two key elements. First, it is understood as something passed through succeeding generations in a relatively fixed form. There is an identifiable core within a specific tradition or mode of transmission that is identifiable through time and among various performances. Second, individual performances reflect a continuity in performance and an adherence to the central core of the tradition to a degree at which any given performance is recognized as fulfilling the dictums of that particular tradition. However, there may be certain variations on the core elements in the individual performances that are idiosyncratic to those performances. These variations, which are

Procession

The act of moving along in an orderly fashion or in a ceremonious or formal manner. The procession dates back to ancient times and serves as an official part of a ceremony during ritualistic activities or festivities. As a form of ritual, the procession can represent a public display of an established social institution. As a structural component of festival, the procession often provides the opportunity for positive group interaction in the community.

The procession is characterized by a display of individuals and institutions who, in the act of moving along in succession, reaffirm their place within the given social structure of a community. In this manner, dominant community values are expressed as a formal event in which the order of the procession is prescribed. Common examples include the processional in a wedding and the *procession générale* in eighteenth-century Montpellier, France, which, as Robert Darnton observed, symbolized the corporate order of urban society. That procession, composed of municipal officials, members of the clergy, and leading officials of the town, was a public statement taken to the streets, whereby the city represented itself to itself, to inspire both power and awe in its observers.

Processions differ from parades in their form and content. The Day of the Dead procession held throughout Mexico every October–November is a religious expression of the temporary merging of the living and spirit worlds to pay tribute to deceased family and friends.

In contrast, the parade is a more flexible and loose form of public display that often conveys sentiments opposed to those in power. Robert DaMatta demonstrated this difference by distinguishing between the ritualistic expressions of Brazil's Independence Day and the world of carnival. Independence Day is associated with the armed forces and national authorities, but carnival is associated with the common people. The procession of authoritarian figures on Independence Day represents the social mechanism of reinforcement that acts to strengthen social roles through the separation of elements, categories, or rules. In contrast, carnival employs the mechanism of inversion that works to unite normally separate social roles and relationships that are rigidly segregated in daily life.

Georgia Fox

framed by group standards, may be expected or accepted in performances of a tradition, but the core elements of the tradition remain identifiable.

There is a more recent trend to define *tradition* in a performance sense—as an interpretive, symbolic connection between the past and the present. In this sense, traditions may give meaning to current institutions and practices, through invented traditions and customs based on past practices. In this instance, tradition becomes a more symbolic and purposefully constructed idea to link with the past, which contrasts with the more traditional, naturalistic definitions that treat tradition as a continuum of practices and beliefs from the past to the present. Common to all of these definitions, though, is the idea that traditions represent a core set of practices

or beliefs based on a connection with past practices and beliefs and that these are accepted by the group and fulfill a specific role in group identity.

Randal S. Allison

See Also Aesthetics; Family Folklore; Festival; Invented Tradition; Ritual; Transmission.

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Traditionalization

The active process by which people situate their creative acts within a history of similar acts either as part of a recognizable tradition or as imbued with the

special status granted to acts deemed traditional. While processes of traditionalization are clearly evident in material and customary culture, the concept has been explored and applied most often in the study of oral narrative.

The idea of traditionalization emerged as folklorists were shifting their thinking from products to processes, from stable texts to creative acts. Where *context* could be identified by a checklist of situational and cultural factors, *contextualization* examined how people actively identified the contexts they deemed both relevant for interpretation and valuable for achieving their particular goals, all *within* their performances. The same was true of tradition. Rather than focus on tradition as an inherent but intangible collective of historical texts and acts, folklorists began to consider the ways in which tradition was accessed and recreated in the act of performance. When Dell Hymes introduced the concept of traditionalization to folklore studies in his 1974 presidential address to the American Folklore Society, he highlighted this paradigm shift: “Let us consider the notion, not simply as naming objects, traditions, but also, and more fundamentally, as naming a process. It seems in fact the case that every person, and group, makes some effort to ‘traditionalize’ aspects of its experience” (1975, 353).

At its most inclusive, traditionalization is an act of contextualization, grounding performance in specific situational, historical, social, and cultural contexts. When those contexts include past performances recognized as part of a coherent tradition, a person can be understood not only to be contextualizing their performance, but traditionalizing it. As often, however, traditionalization is defined more specifically, referencing not only a tradition, but the traditional. Meanings of “traditional” continue to be debated. Following scholars such as Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) and Handler and Linnekin (1984), the concept can be understood as a symbolic quality granted to elements of culture in an ongoing interpretive process that establishes continuity with the past. The traditional becomes more than a dynamic constellation of objects, concepts, and practices, but a resource actively manipulated for specific ends. Further, the traditional indicates a conscious bestowal of status, elevating some aspects of culture above others. It is this elevation of status that makes traditionalization such a useful tool in performance.

In the act of traditionalization, people can draw upon the authority of past performers and performances to validate their own performance. Richard Bauman outlines some of the most common strategies for how traditionalization is accomplished in narrative performance, all of which depend on reproducing or referencing past performances, whether in terms of reported speech, participants, location, presentation style, diction, audience involvement, or formal structure (2004, 149). One of the most common means of traditionalization is attribution, linking current performances to past ones by referencing previous storytellers, storytelling events, and interpretations. By referencing the traditional and not just

tradition, acts of traditionalization have even greater ability to claim authority, even authenticity (see Bauman 2004, 31; Mould 2005).

The dual move into the past and to the value-laden category of the traditional can be viewed as a reaction to modernity, responding, in Hymes's words, to "a world of technology and mongrelization of culture" (1975, 353). Traditionalization is a conservative move, reifying the past as a means of borrowing its authority for one's own performance. However, the process of traditionalizing one's performance by evoking the words, images, and ideas of the past can have the paradoxical effect of challenging the past rather than reifying it. By referencing the traditional, speakers introduce it into performance and therefore into negotiation. While the traditional can be supported and subtly reconstructed, it can also be challenged, both by upending the traditional in favor of modernity or by supplanting one conception of the traditional with another. Such a rhetorical or interpretive move should be viewed as a *result* of traditionalization, rather than part of the process itself.

While folklorists have typically addressed acts of traditionalization made by the individual performer in the act of performance, the process can also be co-opted and applied more broadly both by institutional powers and to entire genres of performance. Concepts of the traditional, particularly when implicated by what is deemed authentic, is often constructed by an elite hegemony (see Bauman 2004, 31 and Gilman 2004). People in positions of power—whether in the public sphere such as in governments or local arts councils, or the academic sphere such as among folklorists or art historians—may strive to traditionalize particular artistic forms, acts, and customs to serve their own interests whether altruistic or self-serving. In this way, the term can refer to any attempt to situate a particular act within a recognized tradition or to elevate a particular cultural practice to the status of the traditional.

Tom Mould

See Also Performance; Tradition.

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Tradition Bearer

A person who preserves traditional materials in memory and transmits them to other people. Traditional transmission occurs through only certain individual members of a given community. These persons can be classified either as *active* or *passive* bearers of tradition.

Carl W. von Sydow, in contrast to the romantic nationalists, claims that tradition does not lie in the depths of the soul of all the people of a given community but rather that it has its custodians, who generally form a minority of the total population. Among the bearers of tradition, von Sydow distinguished two polar types: the active and the passive. The former keep the tradition alive and pass it on via performance. The latter are generally aware of the content of a given tradition and, when asked, can partly recall it, but they do nothing either to spread the tradition or to keep it alive. In folkloristics, this dichotomy is considered to be of classical significance despite the fact that it is one-sided, attending only to a single criterion for classification of tradition bearers.

Another significant discovery made by von Sydow is that the boundary between an active (i.e., living) and passive (i.e., dormant) tradition is variable. An active tradition may, for various reasons, become passive. And every bearer can be active regarding several traditions but clearly passive in respect to others. Von Sydow notes the collective social nature of tradition when he stresses the importance of passive tradition bearers as “the sounding board of tradition” and as the controllers of the stereotyped nature of tradition who establish the acceptable limits of variation in folk performance. Von Sydow’s basic thesis is that tradition does not spread by itself but is moved and transferred by human bearers. Thus, his work calls for a shift in focus from the superorganic transmission of folk traditions to the transmitters of these items.

Many studies of tradition bearers seem to have been troubled by an error in perspective, inasmuch as bearers of tradition often have been narrowly examined as gifted, creative personalities with no connection to any community. Psychological research has clearly centered on the individual. Yet even the consideration of recall and recognition has been disregarded. When the communication of oral tradition is analyzed as a pattern of social behavior, one should examine tradition bearers not only as individual transmitters of tradition but also as members of social groups, who are expected by the community to regularly play specific

social roles. In creating a typology for tradition bearers in a community, their social roles and the role behavior actualized in the transmission of particular genres of folklore should especially be emphasized.

During the last decades of the twentieth century, the research on tradition bearers has widened its scope to include the roles they play in the transmission and perpetuation of age-group traditions, pop culture, and mass lore.

Juha Pentikäinen

See Also Tradition; Transmission.

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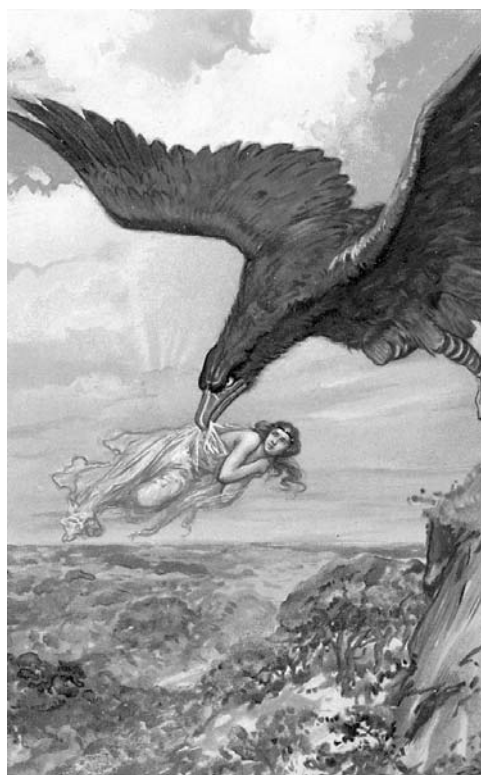
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Transformation

The changing between human and animal. It is widely believed that some human beings are able to transform themselves into animals at will. In European lore, the lycanthrope, or werewolf, is a common form of this transformation, but such figures are common around the world, and they are thought to occur for a variety of purposes. Often (as with the wolf in Europe, the jaguar in South America, and the lion and leopard in Africa), it is a large and dangerous predator whose shape is taken on by a human being. In China and Japan, the fox often functions as a were-animal. Such animals, unlike the were-animals of the movies, look just like other animals of their type; they are not half-man, half-animal creatures. As Johannes Wilbert points out, "Jaguars being alter egos of shamans, one can never be sure whether a jaguar is really an animal, or, rather, a man." Because the transformation involves a substitution of spirits and because the spirit world is a reversed form of the human world, it is not uncommon for the animal transformation to involve an efficacious reversal of some sort: The shaman may somersault one way to turn into a jaguar, then the other way to regain his human form.

A common form of the belief involves a sorcerer who changes periodically into another creature and does terrible damage in animal form. He or she is usually

Thjassi, the giant in his eagle plumage, flies down and catches Iduna. Illustration from *The Book of Sagas* by Alice S. Hoffman, published in 1926. (The Bridgeman Art Library International)



gaining revenge on someone who has given offense. This version of the belief shows up in the following (typical) account: A woman is out in the woods with her husband, but he leaves her alone for a short time, whereupon a wolf attacks her. She defends herself, perhaps aided by another person, and injures the wolf, then sets out to find her husband. But when she finds him, she sees that he has a wound that corresponds to the one the wolf had suffered or has some of her clothing in his teeth. In Europe, the werewolf was believed to undergo transformation by means of a salve and a wolf skin or sometimes a girdle, and he or she might be condemned to live as a wolf for a specified period of time.

The crucial event in such transformations is a movement of the spirit from one body into another; the spirit is commonly viewed as a kind of interchangeable part. Therefore, a human spirit can enter a wolf, for instance, and operate its body, or the wolf's spirit can operate a human body (but in general, it is much more common for a human to turn into an animal). Because such exchanges of spirit occur also with other supernatural figures, it is not surprising that the were-animal belief is not strongly differentiated from some other beliefs that seem, at first glance, to be quite different. In some Slavic areas, werewolves may turn into vampires when they die. And though there are specific apotropaics for warding

off werewolves (such as *A. lycotonum*, or wolfsbane), many of the apotropaics for werewolves are the same as those for other manifestations of the spirit world. Garlic and sharp objects, such as thorns and knives, ward off not just werewolves but also witches, vampires, and the evil eye.

Another common type of animal transformation is that of the shaman who deliberately lets himself or herself be possessed by the spirit of an animal (or causes his or her own spirit to take over the body of the animal) in order to use its superior speed, strength, or sensory capabilities to gain knowledge or effect the cure of a patient. Often, the shaman takes the form of a bird since birds may be seen as manifestations of spirits. (The Slavic *vila* or *rusalka*, a type of fertility spirit believed to be the soul of a girl who died childless, is represented as a bird with a woman's head.)

Some cultures use the concept of transformation to account for the presence of animals. An animal may be explained as a person who committed a particular sin and was transformed into an animal as punishment. Here, there is often a relationship between the form or habits of the animal and the quality of the sin; in Morocco, for instance, the stork is seen in popular belief as a judge who married and then committed a sin and whose bearing and color are reminiscent of his former condition. Such a transformation may be a routine event. As Morris Opler notes, "The Jicarilla associate neighboring tribes with various birds and animals and believe that the ghosts of those belonging to a particular group turn, at death, to the condign form. The Navaho are the Mountain Lion People, the Ute the Owl People, the Pueblo the Prairie Dog People, the Mescalero the Wolf People, the Mexicans the Burro People, and the Americans the Mule People." The Jicarilla themselves turn into coyotes, but not all coyotes are former Jicarilla Apaches; some are just coyotes, and again, one cannot tell the difference between the real animal and the were-animal simply by appearance.

This process of transformation is just one form of the larger category of metempsychosis, or the passage of the spirit from one body to another. Some cultures take the view that a person's animating spirit—once it is ejected, at death, from its body—removes itself to a kind of spiritual holding tank, where it awaits incorporation into another body. If all goes well, it is incorporated into a child of its own clan, a process that is sometimes seen as an explanation for family resemblance. Through divination, the ancestor of the child may be determined, and the child may be named after this individual. Other cultures (and this is well known from Hindu tradition) take the view that the spirit, depending on its habits and character in this life, will be incorporated into a higher or lower form of life in the next. Animals, then, are seen as temporary repositories of the human spirit on its path toward perfection, and a human being who lives badly may be fated in the next life to take the form of an animal that shows the particular negative qualities (such as greed) that he or she showed during this existence.

Just as the spirits of human beings return to animate the bodies of later generations, the same is assumed to be true of the spirits of animals. It is important, therefore, to ensure that this process is not disturbed, so that culturally important animals are not depleted. Among the northern Eurasian peoples, the bones of animals that are used for food may be carefully kept together to allow another animal to come into existence. And since spirits have an affinity for anything that has their form, they may be encouraged to remain in the area by the use of images or drawings of the animal they represent, which hold them in place until they are reincorporated. Although we will surely never know much about the rationale behind the Paleolithic cave drawings, parallels from ancient and modern cultures suggest that they may have been intended as a kind of spiritual template for the physical body, designed to ensure its maintenance or return.

Paul Barber

See Also Assault, Supernatural; Magic; Shape-Shifters; Werewolf.

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Transmission

The process of passing on themes and symbols in language, music, design, movement, and action by which a society forms its tradition. The selection of subjects and forms for transmission is a conscious and unconscious social and individual creative act that ideology, cultural values, and personal emotions influence. The process empowers these subjects with the authority of the past. *Oral transmission*, in particular, is a key term in the conception and definition of folklore. Orality has become a central issue in most inquiries into the possibility of transmission as a natural process governed by natural laws.

Theoretically, in the formulation of Cecil J. Sharp, transmission is subject to three abstract principles: *continuity*, *variation*, and *selection*. Continuity operates through the cultural maintenance of narrative and poetic types and in the retentive memory of performing artists. Variation is a consequence of performance

and its situational circumstances, inventive creativity, unconscious selection, taste, and memory and forgetfulness. Selection, following Charles Darwin's ideas of adaptation, is a function of conformity to community aesthetic and ethical values. Continuity and variations are dynamic forces within the society that culturally and historically operate at cross-purposes; selection becomes their synthesis.

Empirically, there have been two major concerns with oral transmission: its exclusiveness and its accuracy. In nonliterate societies, the exclusiveness of oral transmission is self-evident. However, when the subjects of transmission are sculptures and designs, their accompanied interpretation is verbal; there is an interdependence between oral and visual transmission even in the absence of literacy. In literate societies, such an interdependence intensifies.

It is possible to distinguish three forms of interdependence between oral and written transmission: diachronic, literary, and mnemonic. In diachronic interdependence, oral and written transmissions occur in successive periods. Oral transmission precedes literacy. With the advent of writing, scribes, printers, and learned members of the group select from their oral tradition themes and forms that serve their own purposes and commit them to writing. These texts, in turn, serve as a source upon which oral transmission could draw and to which it refers. The commitment of oral tradition to writing does not necessarily terminate its transmission in its own cultural channels; it continues to exist independently of or in mutual interaction with the written forms.

The motivations for writing down orally transmitted tales, songs, and other folklore forms can be religious, political, commercial, personal, commemorative, or scholarly. Religious functionaries select from oral tradition those themes that they deem most appropriate for their purposes to supplement their own texts. When their faith gains social and cultural acceptance, these texts, once transmitted orally, enjoy the status of a religious canon. Similarly, selectively written-down oral traditions affirm political orders. With the advent of print, local entrepreneurs circulated stories in chapbooks and ballads on broadsides. These have become a major link in the transmission of texts. The oral reproduction of typographical errors attests to singers' and narrators' reliance on printed versions. In other cases, oral artists have written down narrative and poetic texts for their own use, and subsequently, these writings have become publicly available in manuscripts or in other forms of print. In modern times, the folkloristic intervention itself has become a factor in transmission. Tales that scholars recorded have gained popular distribution in society; parents, teachers, and revival storytellers have then disseminated their knowledge either by reading aloud or by oral performances in a literate society.

Literary interdependence involves writers who draw upon oral tradition for their own creative purposes. For example, Sophocles in classical Greece and Boccaccio, Chaucer, and Shakespeare in the Renaissance drew upon oral tradition, either

directly or through mediating sources. Leading writers in many languages have resorted to similar practices, transferring themes from oral tradition and recasting them in literary genres and styles appropriate for literate, urbane audiences. Only when they have maintained or tried to imitate folklore forms have their works had some influence on oral transmission itself. Otherwise, the literary dependence on oral transmission remains one-sided, documenting the knowledge of a particular theme in a specific historical period.

Mnemonic interdependence between oral and written transmission occurs among storytellers, preachers, and singers who jot down phrases, plot outlines, and sometimes complete texts to aid them in their oral performance. Though literate to a degree, these folk artists have learned and then transmitted their narratives and songs orally.

Although the interdependence between oral and written transmission has contributed to the stability of texts, narrators and singers do pass on the forms of their folklore orally from generation to generation and from group to group. The significant factor in oral transmission is memory. Psychological experiments on memory suggest the significance of a knowledge of cultural symbols and genres, formulaic expressions, and idiomatic language in the retention and transmission of folklore. Divorced from these elements and the general cultural context, memory fails and transmission flounders.

As an explanation for the worldwide dissemination of themes in recognized tale types, Walter Anderson has proposed the “Law of Self Correction” (*das Gesetz der Selbstberichtigung der Volkserzählung*). At the basis of this law is the assumption that the averaging of narrative versions tends to draw them toward their standard forms. Each narrator learns stories from many sources, reconciling the differences between them in individual renditions. In turn, in many tellings, the audience’s response and the performer’s own sense of narrative logic help construct a tale that approximates its standard version.

In the absence of community support—when, for example, people migrate and folklore forms are uprooted—there is a qualitative decline in the transmitted texts. There are two kinds of folkloric devolution in transmission, generic and literary. Hypothetical in nature as it is, such an observation suggests that, historically, themes shift from longer to shorter folklore forms, from epics to ballads, from tales to proverbs and jests, and from rituals to children’s verses and games. English ballads that survived the Atlantic crossing, Tristram P. Coffin proposes, shed many of their narrative details, and their American singers retained only the “emotional core” of these ballads. However, once immigrants established their new communities, they developed their own folklore forms, and some of these suggest continuity with those that were transmitted from their countries of origin.

Transmission depends on agency. In every society, there are different cultural agents who transmit the society’s respective forms of folklore. There is a broad

range of folklore proficiency among these agents of folklore transmission, or “bearers of tradition,” as Carl W. von Sydow calls them. They fulfill a variety of social roles. They are the mothers who sing lullabies and tell stories in the nursery, the social jokesters, the ballad singers, the village raconteurs, the market storytellers, and the trained epic singers. The higher their proficiency, the more likely they are to retain their repertoire throughout their lives. Otherwise, they may shift, expand, or narrow the traditional forms they perform depending on their stage in life and social circumstances. As Linda Dégh and Andrew Vázsonyi point out, adequate transmission occurs when there is a fit between agent and genre. A narrator of legends does not necessarily sing ballads well or tell jokes successfully.

The transmission of folklore forms across social and linguistic boundaries may appear to occur as “ripples in the pond” or concentric circles without human migration, but actually, the transmission requires contact between agents from the respective groups. They meet each other in border areas where bilingualism is common or in ports, markets, and other trading posts where travelers from different geographic parts congregate. Within a stratified society, the lower classes aspire to attain the living standards and values of the upper classes, and through imitation, they cause cultural goods to be transmitted downward. Hans Naumann called these goods the *gesunkenes Kulturgut* (filtered down cultural goods). Such a characterization is appropriate for some specific historical forms, but it would not be an acceptable description of the whole peasant culture and nonliterate society.

Agents of transmission often achieve thematic and, in the case of religious texts, even verbatim accuracy. However, factual accuracy in the oral transmission of historical information over long periods of time is a rare phenomenon. First, oral tradition is inadequate for preserving chronology. Second, it tends to collapse events, figures, and actions into established cultural patterns and structures of thought, eliminating the historical texture of events and personalities. Third, since historical information often provides legitimacy for present political leaders, such individuals tend to manipulate it. Therefore, the more naive a speaker is (in terms of being removed from political arenas), the greater the historical reliability is, and the shorter the genres are, the less room they provide for textual manipulation.

Finally, transmission can reach the end of the line. This can occur with the death of a language or the disintegration of a community; it can result from a lack of agents, such as narrators and singers; and it can occur when an audience loses interest and ultimately disappears, having become bored by or oversaturated with isolated traditions that, given the lack of contact with other communities, are never replenished or renewed.

Dan Ben-Amos

See Also Performance; Tradition Bearer.

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Trickster

The central figure in one of the most characteristic worldwide myth cycles—a god, animal, and human all in one who is always duping others and is always duped in return and whose stories tell of experiences involving a lengthy series of dangerous, outrageous, and often obscene adventures and behaviors marked by trickery. The trickster as a character of myth—and the problems of interpreting the ambiguous nature of the figure presented—were noted and described at some length using comparative materials by Franz Boas in an introduction he wrote for a collection of Thompson River Indian stories, published in 1898. The best-known and most influential discussion of the trickster figure, however, is the 1956 book *The Trickster* written by Paul Radin, a later ethnographer much influenced by Boas. The book—actually a collaborative effort of Paul Radin, Karl Kerényi, and Carl Jung—contained the major Winnebago Native American trickster cycle, the secondary Winnebago Hare trickster cycle, and summaries of Assiniboiné and Tlingit Native American trickster myth cycles extensively annotated by Radin. In addition, the book contained an article on the trickster in relation to Greek mythology by Kerényi, a well-known historian of religion of the time, and a psychological interpretation of worldwide trickster myths by Jung.

A special 1990 feature in the culture and folk wisdom section of *The World and I* contained seven articles on the trickster by scholars, offering a more recent discussion of the subject. Researchers from a number of disciplines also published studies and interpretations of trickster figures in many cultures in the years

between Radin and the special magazine section. Despite using different approaches, all the researchers agreed on the fact that the trickster figure is found in clearly recognizable form among all known tribal cultures and in the folklore of most nontribal cultures as well. The researchers noted a host of central figures in trickster cycles: the Native American figure known as Coyote in some groups and Hare, Mink, Blue Jay, or Raven in others; African figures including Spider, Tortoise, Hare, and Jackal; the Japanese Fox; the African American Brer Rabbit and High John the Conqueror; and the Middle Eastern figures of Juha, Mullah Nasruddin, and Nasruddin Hoja.

The character and stories about the trickster show a good deal of variation from culture to culture in terms of the values they reflect, but they share a fine disregard for boundaries. In an Omaha tale noted by Roger Welsh, Rabbit saves members of the tribe from a hill that is destroying them and then sends his penis underwater to impregnate the women and humiliate the tribe.

Radin also noted that the trickster survived in the figure of the medieval jester and continues in Euro-American culture in such forms as Punch and Judy and clowns, and more recent scholarship has shown the trickster's continuing presence in American popular culture. Film tricksters include the central characters in the Keystone Cops series and the many *Police Academy* films, as well as Charlie Chaplin's "little tramp" character and Steve Martin's various comic creations. David Letterman and Johnny Carson, American television's most famous late-night hosts, are tricksters. American popular music stars Bob Dylan and Prince also fit the generally accepted definition of the trickster.

Research and interpretation concerning tricksters explain the appeal, persistence, and function of the figure either in terms of the culture from which a particular cycle of stories had been collected or in terms of all of humanity. The earliest explanations for the strange mix of the trickster figures who make the world safe for humans and ludicrously attempt the inappropriate were framed in terms of a universal history of religion or a universal human psychology, and many recent studies have followed the same path. David Brinton argued that the trickster figure came about as a degeneration of an older culture hero, whereas Boas claimed that the trickster was older than the serious culture heroes. Paul Radin agreed with Boas and initially attempted to find the meaning of the Winnebago trickster within Winnebago culture. Although he provided a careful set of notes that explained the stories in terms of ethnological detail, his final conclusions were psychological. Karl Kerényi noted the similarities between the Winnebago trickster and figures in Greek myth and explained the figure in Freudian terms. Jung himself explained the trickster figures in Native American narrative traditions in terms of his posited universal human psychology and especially in terms of his own theory of the etiology of the human mind and consciousness. Similarly, more recent interpretations of the trickster have explained



Illustration by Fred Kabotie from a San Ildefonso Pueblo tale, "The Coyote and the Blackbirds." (DeHuff, Elizabeth Willis. *Taytay's Tales Collected and Retold*, 1922)

the figure psychologically as a negative model of conduct, showing how not to behave while simultaneously affording a release through fantasy and humor from the strain of acting properly or as an example of how folklore serves human needs by creating a dream life.

Barbara Babcock examined the trickster as a worldwide, cross-cultural figure. Her article blended an interpretation of the trickster in terms of marginality with a close-reading, structural analysis of the Winnebago forty-nine-tale trickster cycle collected by Radin. Her general conclusion was that the trickster is tolerated and welcomed because the narratives of the trickster figure have the power to transform perceptions of reality.

The other major approach to understanding the trickster figure in world folklore, following the example given by Radin's meticulous notes, has been to explore the figure and stories as they have meaning for the people who are the usual and natural audience and performers of the individual traditions. Ellen B. Basso, John Roberts, and Barre Toelken applied this approach to the trickster cycles of the Kalapalo of the Amazon, African Americans, and Navajo coyote stories, respectively, and reached much the same conclusions. All three found the meaning of the trickster stories that they studied within the cultures in which the narratives existed, and Basso and Toelken were particularly alike in their insistence upon approaching tricksters as enablers whose actions—good or bad, sublime or obscene—in narratives turn abstractions into realities that can then be contemplated and evaluated and in their efforts to firmly ground their discussions in the actual languages in which the stories are told.

Both research traditions present ample, solid, and convincing evidence in support of their respective points of view. The only general conclusion possible is that the trickster—at once subhuman and superhuman, bestial and divine, creator

and destroyer, giver and negator, wise and foolish—is of the past and the present, of folk and popular culture, culturally bound and a part of the psychology of all peoples. And it is this destruction of boundaries, the greatest trick of all, that is the essential nature of the trickster and that should serve as the principle for further studies of the figure.

Keith Cunningham

See Also Culture Hero; Shape-Shifters.

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UFOs and Folklore

What place do real UFOs (unidentified flying objects)—if any exist—hold within the perennial fabric of folk belief? Folklorists cannot say whether UFOs are genuine spaceships or only Venus and airplanes mistaken for something more, but they have gained respect for human experience as a necessary source and sustainer of tradition. The former understanding of folklorists sided with tradition as the basis for apparent experiences. By hearing ghost stories an individual learned to expect ghosts at midnight in a graveyard. That same individual passing a cemetery at night and seeing moonlight on a patch of fog might reshape the vague form to fit his expectations and fears, with the outcome a ghost complete with shroud and chains. The “witness” would then reinforce the belief of others by adding his testimony to tradition, though in fact the ghost amounted to mist and misperception force-fitted into an imaginative preconception, nothing more.

In recent years, some investigators have turned this explanation upside down and argued that some traditions endure, even against the rationalistic opposition of official culture, because they have independent experience to back them up. Folklorist David Hufford investigated the “Old Hag” tradition of Newfoundland, a belief that a witch was responsible for experiences of people who wakened in the night unable to move while some evil presence entered the bedroom and choked the victim. The tradition with all its interpretations was well known and long established in Newfoundland, but Hufford found that some of his students in Pennsylvania had suffered similar experiences, even though they knew nothing of the tradition. If the experience was widespread but the tradition was not, the standard explanation that expectations create the experience quite simply fell apart. He established that “supernatural assault traditions” had worldwide distribution. The basic experiential features remained the same whatever the folk explanation might be, and included in part a physiological condition known as sleep paralysis. In this case, the tradition seemed to begin with experience and not the other way around.

A great deal of UFO lore depends on observation. Tens of thousands of people have seen something in the sky that they could not explain, and whether they reported the sighting or not, to them it became a UFO. In most of those cases the expectation led the way as it lent an aura of mystery and significance to an ordinary planet or meteor, a sight the witness would not imagine to be a spaceship without the preparation of tradition. In March 1967, a Soviet moon probe fell



A car topped with a model spacecraft, encouraging people to welcome extraterrestrial beings, is parked near Jamul, California, October 15, 2000. The surrounding land was purchased by the Unarius Academy of Science to serve as a future landing site for “space brothers” from other planets. (Getty Images)

back into the atmosphere and burned up over several Midwestern states. The U.S. Air Force received about 70 reports of this reentry, and most observers gave an accurate description of half a dozen flaming, meteor-like bodies high in the atmosphere. Some even recognized the nature of the objects. But there were a few individuals who saw something entirely different. One reported a UFO flying at treetop level with six lighted windows, fiery exhaust, and riveted steel plates along the hull. Either this witness misinterpreted the reentry in terms of UFO expectations, or two of the most spectacular aerial sights of a lifetime occurred at once, and this witness missed one of them. A great many UFO reports have an experiential basis, but not necessarily an extraterrestrial one. They originate in the eyes of believers and take the shape of a spaceship, where another observer not under the influence of the UFO tradition looks at the same sight and sees nothing more than the evening star.

At the same time, a remainder of reports continues to puzzle the investigator, and the most determined effort to find a conventional solution leaves behind evidence that refuses to fit. Even as fantastic a story as alien abduction defies the typical dynamics of folklore by varying very little from one narrator to another.

Folk narratives typically exist as clusters of variants swarming around a core of ideas. Even tightly constructed forms such as jokes and urban legends multiply as different content fits into the same plot form, or similar content aligns itself with a different plot. Abduction reports are long, loosely constructed, and fantastic—ideal candidates for rampant variation, ready to satisfy the personal needs of anyone looking to escape the dullness of everyday life in fantasies of romance and adventure. In fact, the accounts reflect few of these expectations. The episodes could exchange places and the story would make equally good sense, yet the episodes usually keep the same relative positions in one report after another. The same content recurs in story after story, down to some minor detail seldom if ever emphasized in any published or broadcast accounts, in some cases present in the reports for years before any investigators recognize or call attention to it. Despite all the aliens depicted in mass and popular culture, abductees limit their accounts to very few types and usually describe the rather bland and unimpressive small gray humanoids. All those opportunities for colorful fantasies languish unrealized as abductees usually depict themselves not as the heroes of their own adventure but as victims, taken and used and turned out with no sense of satisfaction, only feelings of resentment and confusion. Such an outcome is surprising for a fantasy, if these reports are truly fantasies. Proposals that abductees as a group are fantasy-prone or subject to suggestion while under hypnosis have proven doubtful when tested. Whatever they prove to be, abductions, like UFOs in general, appear more complicated than simple errors or creative imaginings.

Any final reckoning must balance the two sides that comprise the whole of the UFO mystery. On the one hand, Jung was right to call UFOs a modern myth. They answer big questions about life and the cosmos and tie them all together in a comprehensible whole with visitors from the sky at the center. They restore wonder and mystery, hope and dread to a world where modernization has stifled these emotions. UFOs challenge official knowledge with the grassroots experience of people who see things that the experts refuse to allow. In this rebellious resistance the folk assert the worth of their own knowledge and a democratic faith that officialdom holds less than full understanding of the world. Whatever else UFOs may be, they serve human uses. The vast lore accumulated around the UFO idea speaks less for the needs of reason than for the human needs of people who tell these stories.

On the other hand, there are the UFOs themselves, whatever they may be, much entangled in the myth surrounding them. Folk, popular, mass, and elite cultures take their own approaches to the phenomenon, and the cumulative effect obscures the reality behind a multitude of expectations, wishes, and preconceptions. The UFOs of reality become lost behind the UFOs of belief, to be glimpsed only in distorted versions. Folklorists cannot settle the issue, but whether UFOs crumble into a collection of conventional occurrences or exist as an independent

phenomenon, no one can hope to study UFOs without recognizing the role of human beliefs and concerns in UFO lore.

James R. Lewis

See Also Belief, Folk; Folklore; Myth; Night Hag.

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Urban Folklore

Folklore about cities and in cities; in recent scholarship, folklore generated by and about the modern urban experience. Even the most industrialized, urbanized, polluted, crime-infested city hosts countless examples of traditional folk creativity. Folklore, enhanced and expanded by the mass media and political or commercial interests, thrives in the urban context. The study of urban folklore alternates between the city as a location in which various forms of folklore may be discovered and the city itself as an object of study, illuminated by folklore: Attention shifts, according to Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, from “city as locus to city as focus.”

The collecting of urban folklore began with the first oral and written descriptions of city life. For many centuries, travelers and chroniclers recounted legends about cities and their histories. Folklore enthusiasts of the past also documented the unique urban traditions they encountered in daily life: ballads sung and sold on cheaply printed broadsides, the street cries of vendors, folk speech of the lower classes, and street performances. Excellent collections of city children’s folklore appeared in the middle of the nineteenth century. Scholars of typically rural forms of folklore often recorded materials from country craftspeople, traders, and peasants visiting urban markets. All of these traditions belong to the constantly changing repertoire of folklore that is remembered, maintained, and created in the city.

Folklore scholars in the nineteenth century typically fled from the city and modernity. The European romantics were interested in the traditions of rural peasants,

ancient history, and poetry that could be transformed into national culture. The British anthropologists collected reports of archaic customs and superstitions surviving among the “uncivilized” people of the world. City traditions and urban culture as a whole were usually not addressed by these folklorists.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the folklore of the urban working classes attracted the attention of socialist agitators, who saw in the narratives and songs of factory workers powerful symbols that could be used to mobilize mass labor movements. The resulting popular publications contain a rich variety of urban labor lore, but they should be consulted with care. Just as peasants and rural folklore were idealized in the service of nationalist ideologies, so also was labor lore often romanticized, manipulated, or even invented by political activists. The same was true of the more recent publications in the Soviet Union, which selectively described the forms of workers’ culture and urban traditions that corresponded to government ideology and the official cultural and economic programs.

During the 1920s and 1930s in Germany, pioneering research was published about workers and their traditions. At the same time in the United States, sociologists were turning to the study of city populations and producing the first studies of ethnic groups, criminals, and various members of the urban lower classes. Their research is still a useful source of information about everyday traditions and folklore in the city.

In the late 1960s and 1970s, American folklorists moved away from a past-oriented study of culture in the rural periphery, grappling instead with the topic of American folk culture in the modern world. Richard Dorson and Linda Dégh rejected the ideological manipulation of folklore characteristic of works by Benjamin Botkin and other American romantics and attempted instead to develop the methods needed for accurate ethnographic description of folklore in the city. The 1968 symposium entitled “The Urban Experience and Folk Tradition” posed the question, “Is there a folk in the city?” and answered it with the observation that there was indeed a “folk” but that the materials of folklore had changed. When rural people moved to the city, older genres of folklore lost the traditional performance occasions of the village community and had to either adapt to the urban context or be functionally replaced by other forms. Intensive fieldwork in the steel-mill region around Gary, Indiana, inspired the revision of earlier folklore theories and the recognition of new categories of folklore, such as “personal revelation” and “folklore of crime.”

Urban folklore research led to a change in the approaches to fieldwork and the people to be studied. Urban folk are knowledgeable about recording technology and the uses or misuses of the folklore they perform; they are literate and read the results of research about themselves; they are articulate and forceful in their criticism of people writing about them. No longer could field-workers collect

and publish whatever they pleased. After the urbanization of folklore research, discussions emerged about accurate description, rapport, respect, and responsibility toward the people studied.

Interest in urban culture also grew outside the academic discipline of folklore. Urban anthropology, urban geography, sociology, and social history produced many ethnographies of city life. Municipal governments became aware of the commercial potential (tourism) and political uses (multiculturalism) of urban folklore and hired folklorists to study, stimulate, and celebrate the aesthetically pleasing urban traditions.

In Germany during the 1950s, folklorists rebelled against the rural, preindustrial orientation of earlier scholars. Taking leads from sociology, they refashioned folkloristics as an “empirical science” and set as their goal the study of people in the contemporary world. In 1961, Hermann Bausinger demonstrated that modernity had not destroyed folklore, as generally believed, but that folklore had changed to encompass modern technology and the mass media of communication. Traditional magic, for example, was replaced in its functions by machines and science. Not limited to the study of urban folklore, the German theories nevertheless opened the city as the main setting in which folklore research continued.

The German shift to urban folklore settings culminated in a 1983 conference entitled “The Large City: Aspects of Empirical Cultural Research.” Participants surveyed the history and goals of urban folklore research in nine European countries. The historical development of the modern city and its effect on everyday life, work, and leisure were recurrent themes. Like the earlier American discussions of urban folklore, conference papers described the survival, continuation, and transformation of pre-urban traditions. Others emphasized the city itself as a topic of study. Helge Gerndt, for example, called for the study of three aspects of the city: the city as a structure encompassing and bounding a specific world of everyday culture, the city as a mediator of culture or setting in which unique forms of everyday life are communicated, and the city as a cultural phenomenon with a specific meaning of its own.

The American and German conferences on urban folklore represent a turning point in Western folklore research, a point that has not been reached in many other parts of the world. East European critics observe that reality preceded theory in both cases. The traditional rural village communities and the gifted performers of archaic folklore could be found only with difficulty in modern Germany and the United States, and folklorists in these countries were forced to change their methods, theories, and object of research in order to survive in their professional careers. Whatever the case might be, the shift in approaches uncovered the rich world of urban folk culture and the unique traditions of gifted, creative individuals in urban communities. The urban setting remains a frontier in

folklore research. The existing case studies of separate traditions and groups or even of entire cities have yet to be placed in a broad, internationally valid comparative theoretical framework.

Folklore emerges in the city in diverse contexts. Urban folklorists have favored the study of relatively small groups: families, ethnic or religious communities, associations based on occupation or leisure-time activities, and groups defined by geography—for example, the inhabitants of a building, a city block, a neighborhood, or a district. These enclaves provide a personal, mutually supportive environment based on face-to-face communication, in contrast to what is thought to be the anonymous, impersonal urban environment. Community events encourage the cohesion of these groups.

Communities in urban enclaves announce their presence in traditional actions charged with symbolism (processions, demonstrations, eating, dancing, music performance) and in tangible objects (clothes, flags, food, icons) representing the culture that both holds the group together and distinguishes it from the larger society. The urban context fosters conscious maintenance, revival, and traditionalization of folklore. Extra money and leisure time allow members of the middle classes to create new associations based on shared interests and to establish traditions that hold these groups together. Folklore, understood to be a symbol of a simpler, better way of life in the preindustrial past, is revived as an escape from the perceived evils of modern urban society. Thus, traditions that are being replaced by mass culture in their original rural settings—crafts, costume, custom, music, dance, song—are given a second life in the city.

Ethnic identity acquires special significance when people of many backgrounds must live and work in close proximity. The folklore of ethnicity is displayed in public settings where cultures meet, clash, or confront mainstream traditions. Dense urban housing is another factor leading to the creation of communities. Informal social programs and anticrime (“neighborhood watch”) organizations, for example, set an area apart from the dangers of urban decay, welding coalitions of trust and familiarity among closely spaced but otherwise isolated households. In the city, events such as block parties, neighborhood picnics, or concerts and local outdoor markets (or sidewalk sales) are a few of the traditionalized occasions in which a sense of local community is constructed.

Material traditions mark off enclaves within the city. Municipal ordinances stipulate some degree of uniformity in house facades, but many more unofficial, traditional aesthetic norms produce, for example, similarities in house colors, exterior decorations, and front gardens. Residents learn which “weeds” should be removed and which vegetable- or fruit-bearing plants are appropriate for public view by observing other gardens in the community. Less-visible communities such as American street gangs leave visible signs marking their territory (“turf”) in elaborate graffiti spray-painted on fences or walls.



National Puerto Rican Day Parade in New York City, 2010. (Shiningcolors/Dreamstime.com)

The urban setting gives a double stimulus to folklore: On the one hand, folklore is used to strengthen small communities, and on the other hand, it provides traditional ways for individuals to personalize and humanize the mass-produced, industrial setting of the city. Communal traditions provide their performers with a means of artistic creativity and the possibility to express individual identity. Within certain limits, individual artistic expression is prized in the city, and street performers—musicians, actors, jugglers, speakers, artists—are given money by admiring passersby. It is not, however, the most original art that extracts the greatest resonance (and financial gain) from the fleeting audience; folklore and folklorized elite or popular culture flourish here.

The personal revelation, an expression of individual experience, philosophy, and worldview, gains importance in the egalitarian urban context. In everyday conversations, persons set themselves apart from the faceless, anonymous millions by telling autobiographical stories (personal narratives). Folklore characteristics of these seemingly nontraditional narratives appear in the commonly held themes, beliefs, and fears that they contain. Narratives about rapes, muggings, robbery, and theft, told by the victims or their acquaintances, express both the widespread fears of encountering urban crime and the relief of sharing such fears with reliable, trusted persons.

Many other forms of urban folklore have been described in detail. Problems of terminology emerge whenever a specific genre is placed under scrutiny. For example, two of the most popular forms of folklore that have become known as “urban” are not exclusively urban. *Urban legend*, a term popularized during recent decades, denotes legends containing references to modern technology and circulating among urban populations. The term is misleading, for it refers to narratives that have been collected in urban, suburban, and rural areas alike and that contain both modern and archaic motifs. Moreover, other forms of folklore communicated by means of modern technology (via fax or “Xerox”) are not found only in cities, as implied by the frequently used term *urban folklore*. These are primarily examples of folklore transmitted through the modern mass-media network, which is both urban and rural.

There are few qualitative differences between urban folklore and any other folklore touched by the modern world. All folklore found in cities is a part of modern urban culture, but it is usually not exclusively urban. Some forms of folklore, however, arise directly out of the urban experience.

Everyday life in cities follows many rhythms of work and leisure, acted out differently in various districts. Daytime and nighttime activities will follow identifiable schedules (clocked by factory whistles and the bells of churches and schools), and a calendrical cycle appears in the sequence of workdays and holidays. Business, shopping, and leisure habits are traditional, known by all but rarely prescribed by law. They give observable and recordable evidence about the urban dweller’s perceptions of time.

There are also traditional divisions of space as known by people in a city. The geographical landscape of a city is sometimes printed on maps for use by visitors or municipal governments, but many other maps exist in the minds of people going about their daily existence. Different landmarks reveal different ways of looking at the city: For children, a street is punctuated by stones, gutters, and tree stumps used as markers in games of stickball; for a homeless beggar, the daily circuits revolve around places where money, food, and drink may be obtained, followed by a place to sleep. Other lives are passed on a circle joining home, work, a food store, and a community gathering place. A tourist imagines the city as a cluster of skyscrapers, museums, and parks. Persons in the city have a mental image of the city and the various districts that lie beyond the familiar neighborhood, but this traditional sense of place rarely resembles commercially produced maps. Informal place-names and stories about the city reveal a traditionally formulated landscape of wealth and poverty, work and leisure, history, beauty, and progress and decay.

Images of the city and its everyday life as perceived by the urban dwellers reveal contrasts between, for instance, the cultures of the city and the countryside. Whereas the stereotypical city rigidly follows the clock and calendar, the life of a rural farmer is governed by the weather and the seasons, regardless of

dates. Other everyday traditions indicate that a historical break has occurred between urban and rural folklore. In the twentieth century, cities have fostered the growth and expansion of the middle social classes; it is no surprise, then, that the typically middle-class values concerning time, cleanliness, work, and leisure often predominate in urban culture as a whole.

Everyday culture reveals subtle changes in the characteristics of cities over time. Festivals place these differences in open view, to be identified by urban folklorists. Historical studies show, for example, that public celebrations moved from outlying districts into central areas of the city with the rise of liberal democracy and populist movements; family customs such as weddings, by contrast, have been transformed from public events in rural villages to private affairs among the urban middle classes. Changes in perceptions of openness and privacy signal that larger changes are taking place in cultures.

Images of the city appear in crystallized form in public festivals held by municipal organizations: Parades and pageants address the many cultures of the city, giving every inhabitant occasion to identify with the local government and to recognize its place in the local hierarchy of power. Public political demonstrations are recognized both from above and from below as traditional instruments of social change; memorials construct the city's history, re-creating the past to validate or challenge the present. The mass media and the tourism industry diffuse concentrated images of the city (silhouettes of the skyline, pictures of value-charged sites such as the Brooklyn Bridge in New York), identifying these symbols with the given city and its inhabitants. When the mass-produced images find resonance and are accepted by portions of the urban population, they folklorize, becoming part of the city's informally transmitted culture. Distinctive urban identities form through images constructed in political and commercial processes. Sports, weather, and news broadcasts on television and the other mass media have made people very aware of the existence of their city among many other cities in their country and abroad, intensifying their sense of belonging to a specific place in the transurban context. Audiences struggle and suffer with the eleven football players representing their hometown; sports rivalries between cities run deep in the identities of fans, sometimes even leading them to violence.

The study of urban folklore provides the views of the average city dweller on the great social and cultural changes currently taking place in the world. As people of many backgrounds continue to migrate to ever-expanding cities, rural identities are transformed by the traditions of the city, which are in turn tightly intertwined with national and international culture. If solutions to the world's intercultural conflicts exist at all, then they are to be found in the city.

Guntis Šmidchens

See Also Legend, Urban; Xeroxlore.

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V

Vampire

In European folklore, the spirit of a dead person that returns after death to haunt the living. This spirit (the body remains in the grave) attacks the relatives and friends of the deceased and is viewed as the party responsible for any number of disastrous and actual events, including bad weather, bad crops, sickness, and death. During epidemics, it was assumed that the first person who had died was a vampire, but otherwise, the suspects were commonly murder victims, suicides, alcoholics, and anyone who, during life, had fallen under suspicion of evildoing. In order to end the vampire's depredations, the living would exhume a suspect corpse and examine it for evidence that it was the guilty party. Because literate outsiders have occasionally attended such exhumations, we know what the vampire looked like as it reposed in its grave: The body had decomposed less than expected and was bloated; it was a darker color than it had been during life; the mouth was open and had blood in it; the skin and nails had peeled away, revealing fresh skin and nails; the hair and beard appeared to have grown after death; the blood had not coagulated; there was no evidence of rigor mortis; and the body had a strong smell. These accounts of the vampire in his or her grave, however startling they appear at first glance, have proven to be accurate descriptions of decomposing corpses in the grave, and they clear up some details of the folklore. For example, the belief that the vampire sucked blood appears to be an interpretation of the bloating and the blood at the lips of the corpse. As the corpse bloats from the gases given off by the microorganisms of decay, the pressure in the abdomen forces blood from the decomposing lungs out of the mouth and nose. This blood is taken to be the blood of the vampire's victims and the cause of the corpse's increased size. "Not without astonishment," says an eighteenth-century observer of the exhumation of a vampire, "I saw some fresh blood in his mouth, which, according to the common observation, he had sucked from the people killed by him."

If the corpse was found to be a vampire, it was "killed." Because its blood was thought to be dangerous, people commonly killed the vampire in ways that allowed them to keep their distance. If killed with a stake, the corpse might be covered with a hide or blanket to prevent its blood from spurting onto the people killing it. But staking was just one method of killing the vampire and perhaps not even the most common. In northern Europe, the corpse might be decapitated with

a shovel—a tool that was already at hand and that kept some distance between the vampire and the person killing it. The vampire might also be cut into pieces, excoriated, cremated, or left out for scavengers. Often, several methods were used, the last of which was usually cremation, and the remains were then thrown into running water (water is believed to capture spirits, and running water carries them away). From one geographic area to the next, there are differences in the habits of the vampire, the interpretations of the body in the grave, and the methods of killing it. The Greek version of the vampire, for example, the *vrykolakas*, is not believed to suck blood.

The relationship of the vampire's spirit and corpse is also subject to great geographic variation. Often, the spirit is seen as an insubstantial version of the body, identical in appearance. It is commonly thought to function as a kind of servo-mechanism for the body, so that sleep, unconsciousness, and death are all taken for evidence of a separation of spirit from body. When someone dies properly and is given appropriate funeral and burial rites, his or her spirit makes its way to the afterworld. If death is violent or if the corpse does not undergo the usual rites, the spirit remains behind and returns to the body. Then, the body remains alive in some sense and functions as a dwelling place for the spirit during the day. At night, the spirit wanders about on its own and causes trouble. If the body is destroyed, the spirit has no dwelling place and departs for the afterworld. Alternately, one could destroy the vampire by capturing his or her spirit. In some areas, sorcerers made a living by claiming to be able to see and capture these spirits, even during daylight, although most people saw the vampire's spirit only at night, during sleep. In the Balkans, there was a common belief that vampires could be seen by their sons or by people born on a Saturday, a day when vampires were obliged to remain in their graves.

Among the many apotropaics reported for warding off the vampire are sharp objects (thorns, sickles, hair needles, awls, knives) and anything with a strong smell (incense, cow dung, garlic). A knife might be placed under the pillow to keep vampires away during sleep, and sharp objects might be buried with the corpse to prevent it from being reanimated. (The common practice of burying sickles with corpses has a reflex in our traditional personification of death: a skeleton in a shroud bearing a sickle or scythe.) Another traditional apotropaic is the rose, presumably because of its thorns (at the end of *Faust*, the angels strew roses to disperse the devils). In Slavic areas, roses were commonly embroidered onto the cuffs and neck openings of shirts and blouses, not just as decoration but also to protect against the spirits of the dead.

The vampire of European folklore bears little resemblance to the vampire in popular films and literature, although it provided the inspiration for them. Suave counts in evening dress, castles, and even bats were donated to the traditional lore by nineteenth-century writers of fiction. (The bat made its way into the



On board the *Demeter*, the vampire Count Orlok emerges from one of his coffins before they can be destroyed by the ship's first mate in a scene from F. W. Murnau's expressionist horror film *Nosferatu* (1922), based on Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* (1897). (Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

fiction after a Central American bat, which lives on blood, got its name from the vampire of folklore.) Vlad Dracul himself, a Romanian hero of the fifteenth century, had no connection at all with the history of the vampire except that he contributed his epithet (*dracul* is the Romanian word for devil plus the definite article) to Bram Stoker's fictional character Dracula.

Paul Barber

See Also Assault, Supernatural; Revenant; Shape-Shifters; Werewolf.

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Verbal Art

A branch of folklore encompassing all orally performed genres and ways of speaking. Verbal art has usually been defined according to its constituent varieties (e.g., myths, legends, *Märchen*, proverbs, riddles, song texts) and has been viewed in contrast with nonverbal folklore, on the one hand, and literary narrative genres, on the other. The inclusive sense of the term *verbal art* makes it of value to folklorists, especially those interested in broad, overarching aesthetic and performative features of oral culture. The study of verbal art draws on analytical methods such as ethnopoetics, discourse analysis, and linguistic approaches.

The term *verbal art* was proposed by William Bascom in 1955. Bascom's concern (still a problem in folklore research today) was that the term *folklore* does double duty, leading to confusion. On the one hand, *folklore* is used holistically to denote the entirety of the field, including verbal art, customs, material culture, and so on. On the other hand, many folklorists and anthropologists reserve the term *folklore* exclusively for the purely verbal genres. By using *verbal art*, Bascom argued, folklorists can avoid such confusion and further promote the use of the term *folklore* in its broadest sense.

In practice, the term *verbal art* has not spread as widely as Bascom might have hoped. It is used most extensively by folklorists with anthropological training, and it tends to be found in studies of African or Native American peoples. The fact that many of the most promising methods for verbal art analysis have come from studies of non-European communities may bode well for the term *verbal art* in the future.

Contemporary verbal art studies often focus on strategic and stylistic choices made during oral performance. For instance, a performer may express identity or

attitude through code switching in a bilingual or diglossic community. Shifts in register and dialect may accomplish the same ends in monolingual communities. Many cultures also possess elaborate, specialized vocabulary or stylistic features for storytelling, poetry, speeches, or other forms of oral performance. These special ways of speaking constitute an important part of a culture's verbal art.

As a blanket term, *verbal art* allows folklorists to talk about all spoken or recited genres within a given culture. Recent folklore research demonstrates clearly that verbal art differs in substantive ways from written communication. At the same time, oral and written genres appear to borrow much more readily from each other in daily life than earlier folklorists assumed. Verbal art and written art fall along a continuum of expressive options and norms open to competent performers of a given culture.

Thomas A. DuBois

See Also Aesthetics; Ethnoaesthetics; Ethnopoetics; Folklore; Genre; Performance.

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Verbal Duel

A bounded series of linked insults usually involving two combatants and performed before a wider audience of peers. The verbal duel genre is found most often among males and occurs in cultures throughout the world. It has been observed in various forms among indigenous peoples of the Americas, north Eurasia, and Africa, in agrarian European and Middle Eastern cultures, and in urban African American and Puerto Rican social life, as well as in certain historical sources (e.g., the Viking age *flyting* [exchange of personal abuse in verse form] of Scandinavia). The contexts for dueling vary cross-culturally, ranging from impromptu sessions during conversation to elaborate formal competitions performed at assemblies or weddings. In any case, the performance is set apart from normal discourse by formal bounds, including the use of poetic vocabulary, stock images or topics, exaggeration, overt innuendo and double entendre, rhythm, rhyme, or melody. Key to

the competition is the ability of combatants to match the insults of their opponents with equal or preferably more effective retorts until one player loses temper, concedes defeat, or is unable to come up with a reply. Invariably, the audience plays a central role in judging the success of the insults and retorts, approving of the combatants' wit and monitoring the players' reactions. Often, reports of particularly artful or fierce verbal duels pass into narrative tradition and are recounted by former witnesses as evidence of an individual's wit or prowess. Such reports of verbal duels constitute a secondary narrative genre of great importance in determining the form and frequency of future duels and in creating folk heroes or cycles.

In the folklore research of the performance school, boundedness refers to the existence of verbal, paralinguistic, or behavioral markers that signal to the co-performer or audience a shift from ordinary discourse to active performance. In the most widely studied forms of verbal dueling—African American *dozens* and Turkish boys' rhymed insults—such signals include the use of metrically regular lines and rhyme as well as shifts in stance and voice quality. Similar features characterize the Chamula and Lebanese varieties of verbal dueling. In the north Eurasian cultural region, performance boundaries are created through adherence to musical conventions (e.g., melody, alliteration, rhyme, rhythm) and through the existence of clearly demarcated ritual contexts. The Faroese *drunnur* tradition, performed during weddings, as well as the wedding insult sessions of Karelian and Ingrian tradition, rely on a broader ritual context for justification and performative bounds. The Inuit song dance, performed at a communal assembly after a long period of preparation and composition, constitutes one of the most clearly demarcated and formal varieties of the genre. Similarly, the Ewe people of Ghana perform insult songs as part of an annual festival and rely on the genre as an important means of social control and community maintenance.

Performative boundaries permit combatants to invoke and maintain what the theorist Gregory Bateson terms a *play frame*, a marked departure from the rules of ordinary behavior during which all actions are interpreted as non-serious. Maintenance of the play frame allows opponents to broach topics otherwise taboo in ordinary conversation and to make accusations that would normally lead to serious conflict. Such topics include claims of sexual promiscuity on the part of the opponent or the opponent's family, accusations of homosexuality or incest, and assertions of culturally stigmatized characteristics (e.g., selfishness, conceitedness, physical deformity, impotence). As long as the accusations are made within the overt guise of play, the opponent must accept them as humorous or lose the game. Inevitably, the limits of decorum within such play are subject to negotiation and testing, and verbal duels may result in physical conflict in many cultures. Alternatively, remarks made in a verbal duel may permanently damage interpersonal relations, leading to long-standing grudges or even hatred. Success or failure in verbal duels may influence one's overall status in the community and determine one's success in future endeavors.

The topics covered in verbal duels vary cross-culturally but always indicate important concerns or taboos. Generally, the topics characteristic of the genre in any one culture are fairly restricted in number, consisting of three or four primary categories of frailty or transgression and usually closely tied to notions of face and status within the community. In African American dozens, for instance, insults often focus on the sexual promiscuity of the opponent's female relatives, particularly the mother. In Turkish duels, the insults may focus on homosexual tendencies. In Inuit song duels, insults may aver the opponent's lasciviousness, incest, or greed. Faroese duels center on such topics as marital conduct, sexual appetite, and impotence.

The successful retort usually continues the initiated theme, elevating the stakes of the competition by making more extreme accusations in the same vein against the opponent. Switching topics—that is, failing to produce a linked insult—can be interpreted as a loss of the competition and is thus avoided. Linkage is further achieved through metrical reproduction of the prior utterance, use of rhyme to bind utterances together, metaphoric plays or double entendres based on key words from the prior utterance, and other verbal patternings. Because many verbal dueling traditions demand speedy replies, retorts may be memorized and drawn upon by performers at appropriate moments. Memory becomes as important an attribute of the expert player as wit in such traditions, although the truly remarkable retort is always one that combines elaborate formal linkage with novelty and aptness.

As with other forms of joke, the verbal duel has been interpreted generally along functionalist and psychoanalytical lines. When the genre occurs among male adolescents—as in the case of African Americans, Turks, or Chamula—folklorists have viewed it as a testing ground for the development of adult oratory skills. When the genre exists among adult males bound together in ambiguous but important alliances—for example, in-law status in some African cultures or trading partnerships in Inuit communities—folklorists have viewed the genre as a safety valve for alleviating attendant strains and hostilities. Verbal dueling within the wedding context or shamanic system has been seen as expressive of conflicts of values or interests inherent in certain social institutions.

When examining folklore genres from a cross-cultural perspective, it is important to distinguish between genres that display clear evidence of diffusion across linguistic and cultural lines (e.g., *Märchen*, legends) and genres that appear to occur more or less independently in various cultures. Verbal dueling belongs to the latter category, although the overall origins of the genre may indeed lie in a single ancient tradition. Apparent similarities between verbal duels from culture to culture may mask marked differences in the symbolic or functional implications of the genre. Thus, in African American, Puerto Rican, Chamula, Lebanese, or Turkish cultures, community members may regard the genre as informal and inappropriate to more decorous occasions, whereas members of other cultures in northern Europe, Siberia, Africa, and North America may regard it as a central

Boast

Formulaic praise of self or one's property and associates. The boast as a distinct verbal art genre almost always occurs in association with other forms, and boasting may occur in folklore when the boast as genre is not present. In most cases, formulaic boasts are specific to particular contexts, especially those defined by age and gender. They are often a component of competitive displays that may be ends in themselves or that may lead to further competition, even physical violence.

Verbal dueling, usually an activity of adolescent males, provides an important context in which boasts occur cross-culturally. For example, the ritual exchange of insults that characterizes what is called "dozens," "joning," or "snaps" among young African American males focuses principally on derogating the opponent and his family. But frequently, boasts of one's prowess, especially sexual, contribute to the duel's outcome, which depends upon verbal agility and one's ability to undercut the opponent's masculinity. Reducing the opponent to an image of passivity can be achieved at least partially through boasting of one's active masculinity, a technique that also has been reported in verbal dueling among Turkish youths.

Boasts also occur in longer forms of folk literature. One characteristic of the epic hero, be he Achilles or Odysseus from Homeric Greece, Beowulf from Old English tradition, or the protagonists of the Balkan epics reported by Milman Parry and Albert Lord, is his boasting, an act that may figure into council scenes, serve as preparation for battle, or comprise a warrior's account of an action in which he has participated. The humor of the American frontier produced similar boasts, which probably served to burlesque the characters' uncivilized manners. Davy Crockett or Mike Fink would claim to be "half horse, half alligator" and able to "lick [his] weight in wildcats" before scuffling with an opponent. The toast, a long narrative poem recited by African American males, often features a boastful protagonist who extols his own violent disregard of convention. Among Native Americans of the plains, boasts became part of the formula for coup tales, stories in which warriors recounted their military exploits, especially those that evinced particular daring. The tall tale provides another folk literary context for the boast. The focus of tall tales, though, may not be praise of self as much as of the country where one lives. For example, tall tales often include boasts about a land's fertility and richness, the size and accessibility of its game, and the beauty of its women.

Boasts also may assume a negative cast, though their ultimate purport redounds to the boaster's credit. For example, American humor includes boasts about the excessively inclement weather and general insalubrity of rural areas and the toughness of city neighborhoods. On one hand, these boasts derogate, but on the other, they stress the speaker's prowess in being able to survive unpleasant, dangerous conditions.

Formulaic boasting seems to flourish in societies that stress the so-called "masculine" virtues of aggressiveness toward other males, women, and the environment. Folklore research has tended to examine such boasting in terms of its linguistic patterning and psychological importance, the latter usually informed by Freudian assumptions.

William M. Clements

means of social control. Folklorists must balance outward performative similarities with careful observation of use and significance.

The seeming paucity of female participants or forms of verbal duel raises methodological questions. It may be that female varieties of verbal aggression have been excluded from the usual definition of the verbal duel due to a reliance on male data or phenomena. African American women, for instance, often report knowledge of and even proficiency in verbal dueling, although their participation has not been ethnographically examined. Further, women may possess distinct forms of verbal aggression that display structural or functional similarities with male genres. The role of gender in verbal aggression in general and in folkloristic examinations of the topic deserves much more attention.

Thomas A. DuBois

See Also Joke; Obscenity; Scatology.

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Vernacular

An analytic term applied to cultural forms or behaviors that are alternate to or held separate from those practices exhibited, regulated, or controlled by institutions. Sometimes used as a synonym for *folk*, the term more properly refers to cultural expression that is rooted in a specific community without necessarily suggesting any traditional features in the expression.

Derived from the Latin word for “home born,” one of the earliest known uses of *vernacular* to describe expressive human behavior was around 49 BCE when the ancient Roman politician and philosopher Marcus Tullius Cicero suggested that the “vernacular” was a source of persuasive rhetorical power (Cicero 1971, 147). Linked to participation in a particular community, Cicero referred to the vernacular as an “indescribable flavor” in the political speeches of a successful politician of his day. Unlike the arts of oratory, however, Cicero’s vernacular existed and was learned outside of formal education in Roman schools. Over 1500 years later, the term entered the English language as an outgrowth of this meaning to refer to the local languages of Europe in the seventeenth century. As a lingering result of Roman influence at that time, European institutional discourse including that of government, education, science, and the Catholic Church was conducted almost exclusively in Latin. Languages like English, French, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish were termed “vernacular” to distinguish them from institutional Latin.

Then, in the nineteenth century, there was a surge of interest in the literature, practices, and beliefs expressed in the European vernaculars. Many individuals began to imagine nations as defined by local languages and regional practices. While occasionally referred to as vernacular during the nineteenth century, the English-speaking scholars and writers interested in these kinds of expression primarily used the term *folklore*. For them, this latter term captured the nationalist and Romantic implications of their time by linking local culture to an imagined ground of knowledge that was generally termed *tradition*. *Vernacular* began to come back into fashion in the 1950s when some architects began to use it to refer to local building styles. In 1960, the term was popularized for use in cultural theory more generally when anthropologist Margaret Lantis used it to refer to “the commonplace” (202). For her, “high” culture was only accessible by the elites of a society, but “vernacular culture” remained accessible to all. From this usage, two trajectories of meaning came to be associated with the term in cultural theory. On the one hand, vernacular forms are those available to individuals or groups who are subordinated to institutions, and, on the other, they are a common resource made available to everyone through informal social interaction. Based on this dual meaning, the vernacular came to refer to discourse that coexists with dominant culture but is held separate from it.

The term's most significant uses in folklore studies today are in three areas. First, *vernacular architecture* refers to those building designs that are known and practiced in specific communities instead of by professional architects such as nomadic peoples' tent-making practices (Rapoport 1969, 4). Second, *vernacular religion* refers to the everyday lived religion of specific individuals such as the communities of alternate Catholicism created by homosexuals (Primiano 1995, 51). Third, *vernacular discourse* refers to communication practices that are not necessarily traditional, but emerge dialectically distinguished from institutionally sanctioned communication (Howard 2008b, 490). With the emergence of network communication technologies, the term has gained new life as a way to designate the expression of communal authority that is often found embedded in or intertwined with institutional media communication (Howard 2008a, 192).

Origins of the Term

After the term came into regular use among folklore researchers in the twentieth century, it gave rise to some concern because of its origins as a term that referred to a specific kind of human slave. The Latin word *vernacular* is derived from the Classical Greek word *oikogenes* that literally means "home-genetic." In extant Greek writings, an *oikotrips* is a "home-born" slave. A distinguishing quality of the *oikotrips* was her or his ability to speak Greek. This meaning is made clear in Plato's "Meno" when Socrates asks Meno to provide a "retainer" for an experiment in learning. Meno brings a boy forward, and Socrates asks, "He is a Greek and speaks our language?" Meno responds, "Indeed yes—born and bred in the house [literally "yes, he is 'home-genetic'"]" (Plato 1989, 365). By the Roman period, Latin had come to dominate the colonial holdings of the Roman Republic and later the Empire. Latin speakers translated *oikogenes* as "vernacular." At this time, *Vulgar Latin* was a blanket term covering the many spoken dialectics of Latinate languages that were spread across Western Europe. These came to be called the "vernacular languages" of Europe in the seventeenth century.

Even in the sense of a "vernacular" language, however, the term relies on a distinction between an institutionally empowered language and a local or everyday language. In Roman society, most slaves were seized during wars, in the suppression of colonial insurrections, or even outright piracy. The vast majority of these slaves spoke one of the many forms of Vulgar Latin. Since any person born to a slave woman (regardless of the social position of the father) was automatically a slave, female slaves were encouraged to have children to increase the master's slave stock (Bradley 1987, 42). These *verna* became more valuable than their mothers because they were native speakers of Classical Latin and could be trained in more valuable skills. In this sense, the *verna* was vernacular not because she or he knew their own language natively but because she or he knew

the institutional language natively. While some see this history of slavery as a reason to avoid using the term, others find that it renders the term more flexible. This flexibility emerges because the dialectical nature of the term suggests interdependence or even hybridity between everyday or folkloric cultural elements and institutional structures.

Accepting its hybridity, Henry Glassie has argued that the vernacular should be conceptualized as embodying “values alien to the academy” (Glassie 2000, 20). In this sense, vernacularity emerges into meaning only in relation to the institutional that must be logically prior to it. That is to say, its meaning relies on its apparent distinction from institutionally empowered cultural forms—what Glassie terms “the academy.” The “alien” is alien precisely because it is found alongside the locally born. Accepting this interdependence, the vernacular cannot be fully disentangled from its opposite. As a result, the term can refer to one layer of meaning that resides among others—even in a single object or behavior. Because it can emerge as one layer among others, the vernacular can be a component part of the behaviors or products of institutions, their documents, or their officials just as easily as it can designate a more obviously folkloric expression. This sense of the vernacular was most vividly captured by Leonard Primiano’s argument that when the pope or Dalai Lama performs a private personal prayer, even that expression is vernacular (1995, 46).

Three Theoretical Conceptions of the Vernacular

As the term is used in cultural theory today, it is conceived in three theoretically distinct ways. First, the vernacular is often imagined as local expression that is distinct from larger institutional discourses. In this “subaltern” view, the vernacular voice is that of the subordinate counter-agent seeking to be heard over hegemony. In a second theoretical conception, the vernacular is imagined as a shared resource, a *sensus communis*, or community *doxa*. In this “common resource” view, the vernacular is a communal chorus that emerges from the multiplicity of voices speaking in the noninstitutional discursive spaces of quotidian life. Both of these conceptions, however, rely on a strict division that fails to fully account for the interdependent nature of the vernacular and the institutional.

The third conception, the “dialectical” vernacular, addresses this concern by returning to the ancient origins of the word to emphasize that what is vernacular is only so when it is held distinct from what must come structurally prior to it—the institutional. As a result, the vernacular is always entangled with the institutional. This conception frees the vernacular from having to demonstrate authentic connections to a particular tradition or community. At the same time, it accounts for the appearance of vernacular meaning embedded in objects or expressive behaviors that are largely institutional. In this way, the dialectical conception of the vernacular resists essentializing any expression as entirely vernacular or folkloric.

The concept of the “subaltern” vernacular locates what is authentically vernacular in historically subordinated groups. Derived from a term for low-ranking officers in the British army, the concept of the “subaltern” refers to groups whose power is severely limited or denied by social structures. Researchers have sought to understand what discursive means are available for the subaltern to effect changes in their subordinated status. In 1988, Henry Louis Gates Jr.’s *The Signifying Monkey* described the vernacular as a source of discursive power for African Americans. In 1995, Kent Ono and John Sloop called for critics to explore such vernacular discourse because it “resonates within and from historically oppressed communities” (20). Ono and Sloop specifically define vernacular discourses as those that “emerge from discussions between members of self-identified smaller communities within the larger civic community” (2002, 13). From this perspective, the vernacular emerges in the expressive behaviors of individuals who are seen as being held outside of the larger “civic” community because they are identified with a historically subordinated or “subaltern” group. With this subaltern view of the vernacular, researchers have generated excellent scholarship focusing on the possibilities and limits of counter-agency.

While the subaltern view of the vernacular emphasizes a community of individuals who are alternate to institutions, the common resource view of the vernacular locates it in the contexts where the human expression occurs. The vernacular is that which is enacted or performed in places, times, or documents other than those that are institutionally empowered. Here, the vernacular is a common recourse that is available to everyone, but one held separate from institutional contexts. Associated with the informal expression of the community in this second conception, the vernacular is the communal and informal action of many individuals over time. The general association between communal or “public” action and the vernacular is fully articulated in Gerard Hauser’s 1999 *Vernacular Voices*. Hauser argues that “Publics are emergences manifested through vernacular rhetoric” (1999, 14). Hauser’s “vernacular rhetoric” is the dialogic force of the community. This force emerges in what Hauser calls the “mundane transactions of words and gestures that allow us to negotiate our way through our quotidian encounters” (11). From this perspective, the vernacular is equated with the *doxa*, *sensus communis*, or “common sense” that is maintained and taught within a local community but held separate from institutional power structures.

The third or “dialectical” conception of the vernacular retrieves its meaning from the ancient texts where the term first appears. Because the verna was defined as a person who was held apart from but could still gain power from Roman institutions, the vernacular is here imagined as in a strictly dialectical fashion as anything that is marked as separate from the institutions that exercise control over it. Separated from a necessary association with any particular origin, the vernacular can emerge even in the behaviors of an institutional actor. For

example, when a world leader such as a U.S. president uses a regional pronunciation or speaks in colloquial language, she or he is a fully institutional actor who is accessing a vernacular mode of expression. Here, the vernacular can support or contest the institutional because its definition is not based on any authentic counter-hegemonic or subaltern identity for the individual engaging it. Instead, the vernacular emerges even when a president or the pope seeks to express her or himself in terms that suggest they are alternate to the institutional structures of power.

Much as the verna was in the unique position of being able to introduce extra-institutional influence into the very institutions that rendered her or his enslavement, a dialectical conception of the vernacular imagines vernacularity as a quality of any expressive discourse that attempts to convey meaning by distinguishing itself from institutions to which it is subordinated. This paradoxical relationship is embedded in the historical meanings of the term *vernacular*, and it points away from the strict separation from the institutional in the both the subaltern and common resource conceptions of the vernacular.

Because access to vernacular authority is not granted based on participation in any specific local community, it is accessible to everyone. At the same time, however, this universal access does not diminish the authenticity of any specific vernaculars because vernacularity is granted whenever an individual performs her or his own position as subordinate to the institutional. Because this subordination is emergent in discourse, access to such authority is possible only in degrees as alterity from institutional power is asserted. Thus all that is vernacular relies on the institutional to make its meaning. As a result, vernacularity is always empowered by the very institutions from which it seeks alterity.

A subaltern vernacular sees noninstitutional expression as a means to empower marginalized groups. So doing, it locates an essential identity in the individuals enacting the vernacular as necessarily disempowered. The common resource conception locates its essential identification of the term in the situations that allow for informal social forces to shape the discourse of agents over time. Both conceptions of the vernacular seek to account for noninstitutional power by imagining a strict division between the vernacular and institutional that has probably never really existed. Distinct from these two theoretical conceptions, the dialectical vernacular accounts for hybrid expressions that are both institutional and vernacular even while it avoids the necessity of establishing an essential authentic identity or folkloric origin for the vernacular elements.

The Analytic Flexibility of the Vernacular

The dialectical conception of the vernacular is particularly useful when examining contemporary expressions that mix institutional and noninstitutional materials such as DJ performances. When commercially produced institutional recordings are remixed

in a local live performance, the result is a hybrid of institutional and vernacular expression. Entanglements of mass media, commercial, and folkloric expression such as this are particularly common in Internet-based folk expression. There, individuals make hybrid “vids,” “mashups,” or “imagemacros” by combining commercially produced media objects to express their own everyday creativity. While short-term “traditions” have emerged in the communities where these artistic forms are created, they take as their main components mass media instead of traditional materials. In this sense, many of these new forms of expression do not seem folkloric. At the same time, they are the product of today’s “folk”—everyday people using what is near at hand in their cultural repertoire to create meaning for themselves. In this situation, the dialectical conception of the vernacular has proved very useful.

The dialectical conception of the vernacular is more flexible than the term *folkloric* because it resists a romanticizing or essentializing of what it is identifying. It imagines individuals or groups of individuals who in any given case may be acting through some institutional and/or some vernacular means. Further, it imagines the locations of discourse made possible by institutional forces as potential locations for vernacular expression. At its base, this conception of the vernacular imagines a web of intentions moving along vectors of structural power that emerge as vernacular whenever they assert their alterity from the institutional. Because a dialectical conception of the vernacular asserts neither a purely noninstitutional object nor a verifiable traditional trajectory, vernacularity is far more flexible as an analytic term than is *folkloric* or *folklore*. This flexibility renders the vernacular better suited for situations where the traditional or institutional elements of specific expressions are difficult to disentangle. In the twenty-first century, the expansion of digital communication and reproduction technologies represent at least one realm of cultural analysis where the term will continue to serve as a significant analytic concept.

Robert Glenn Howard

See Also Folklore; Language, Play; Oikotype/Oicotype; Religion, Folk; Speech, Folk.

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Volkskunde

The description of the entire lifestyle of the folk or the interpretation of folk groups as revealed through the study of their traditions, customs, stories, beliefs, dances, songs, and other forms of folk art. Literally meaning “folklore,” the word is derived from the German *Volk* (people or nation) and *Kunde* (information). Coined by Clemens Brentano and Achim von Arnim, *Volkskunde* as a concept achieved currency after Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm began using the term to discuss oral folk narratives and Germanic mythology in works such as their two-volume collection of German folk narrative, *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (1812–1815).

Specifically, the early nineteenth-century German scholars such as the Grimms applied the term to describe the study of the entirety of the life of rural peoples, who were removed from modern culture by virtue of their habitat. These antiquarians viewed the peasant class as a something of a pure, original group and looked upon their traditions as remainders of an earlier time. By collecting these remnants and studying them, the antiquarians hoped to piece together a picture of the origin of the groups’ traditions and lifeways. The emergence of romantic nationalism led its adherents to begin to focus on these remnants as a means of encapsulating national or ethnic identity. The term *folk* began to replace *peasant* as a preferred term, and the former term came to denote common unity rather than class distinctions.

Spurred on by the rise of romantic nationalism and an interest in antiquarian studies, the term *Volkskunde* was adopted by scholars outside of Germany as a

cover term for folklore and folklore studies. In the early nineteenth century, the term *popular antiquities* was widely used among English-speaking scholars to denote the areas of study that the Grimms and others were undertaking. In a nod to the German term *Volkskunde* and the changing attitudes of the scholars, English antiquarian William John Thoms suggested in 1846 that the term *folklore* be adopted as the preferred term for antiquarian studies among English-speaking scholars.

Volkskunde, like *folklore*, is still an appropriate cover term for the field of folklore studies. However, both terms have fallen under attack as being too broad in meaning. As a result, in Germanic usage at least, terms denoting the specific areas of study are becoming more common and are often used in place of the overall term *Volkskunde*. Among these terms and areas are: *Volkerkunde* (ethnology), *Volkscharakter* (folk or national identity), *Volksleben* (folklife), *Volkslied* (folksong), *Volksmedizin* (folk medicine), *Volkssitte* (folk or national custom), *Volkssprache* (folk or vernacular speech), and *Volkstracht* (folk or national costume).

Randal S. Allison

See Also Folklife; Folklore; *Gesunkenes Kulturgut*.

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W

Werewolf

Literally, a “man-wolf” (from the Old English *wer*, or man, and *wulf*, or wolf); a human being transformed into a wolf by witchcraft or by the person’s own power. The belief in werewolves is international. The first information comes from Herodotus (fifth century BCE) attributing lycanthropy (werewolfism) to the *Neuroi* (Proto-Slavs or Proto-Eastern Balts): “Scyths and Greeks who live in Scythia tell that every *Neuroi* is transformed once a year for some days to wolf, after which he resumes his former shape.” In the Ukraine and Belorussia, the belief in werewolves is especially strong. It is believed there that werewolves can change themselves further to dogs, cats, bushes, or tree stumps.

The bloodthirsty werewolves primarily hunt animals, infrequently human beings. They move at night and must assume the human form before daybreak. If they are wounded, the wound appears on the human body of the person who was transformed into the wolf. This belief is widespread. James Frazer gives examples from Livonia, the mountains of Auvergne, Padua, and the French district of Beauce. The same belief also is encountered in Estonia, Finland, and Russia.

To change into a werewolf, a human throws on a wolf skin or puts on a magic belt. In Estonia, one can crawl through openings, such as the bow formed by the trunk of a tree and its top when it grows back to the earth, and say a magic formula. In Lithuania, a human changes into a werewolf by somersaulting over a tree stump, crawling backward under the space between a pine tree root and the ground, turning two somersaults in the area between two stakes driven into the ground, passing under the bow formed by four poles driven into the ground, and so forth. The Belorussians and Ukrainians turn into werewolves by going into the woods to somersault over a tree stump into which a knife has been driven. Among the Balts and Slavs, transformation can also be accomplished by putting on a magical belt or a wolf skin.

The ritual donning of the wolf skin can be understood as causing a radical change in the person’s behavior, as the transformation from human to carnivore occurs. Crawling through a narrow opening can be explained as the imitation of rebirth, that is, the “sham birth,” of the person into a new being because of the similarity of the opening to the birth canal.

To regain human form, the tricks for becoming a werewolf are usually performed in reverse. The lasting effect is achieved by burning the wolf skin used by



Engraving showing a werewolf devouring a young woman, ca. 1901. (Time Life Pictures/Getty Images)

the person for transformation or giving food to the werewolf. In the Baltic countries, a legend is told that a man offered a wolf a piece of bread on the tip of a knife. The wolf grabbed the bread together with the knife and ran away. When the man recognized his knife at a merchant's in Riga, he was amply rewarded by the merchant for the kindness he had shown to the werewolf. This legend reflects the popular belief that a supernatural being becomes human by eating human food.

Stories are told of wedding parties transformed into werewolves, who, as a group, roamed and plundered in neighboring countries. According to Felix Oinas, werewolves were called *viron sudet*, "Estonian wolves" in southeast Finland since they were believed to have come from Estonia, where they had been changed by a witch, a Russian, or a Latvian. The transformed wedding parties also came to Finland from Russia and Lapland. Such transformations also were known in Belorussia. In general, the people are inclined to consider werewolves as belonging to another nation or as having been transformed by foreign sorcerers. This conclusion is in line with the so-called out-group attitude that attributes everything negative to foreigners, especially to neighboring nationalities.

The werewolf eats the meat of the animal raw. In the Baltic area (Estonia, Livonia, Latvia), if someone asks the werewolf about this or curses the creature,

the werewolf hits the person's face with the animal's leg or with another piece of meat. The meat gets instantly roasted and burns the face of the person who was hit. This incident signifies the werewolf's transition from the world of raw to the world of cooked, that is, from the supernatural world to the human world.

Among the south Slavs, werewolves have merged with vampires; the term for werewolf, *vukodlak*, *volkodlak* (literally, wolf's hair), has become the name for the combined werewolf-vampire. In Yugoslavia, there are only a few traces of the *vukodlak*'s lycanthropy. Most often, however, the *vukodlak* appears as a vampire, which comes out of the grave at night to attack people at home.

In countries where there are no wolves, the place of the werewolf is taken by the fiercest wild animal in that region. Thus, there is the weretiger in India, Borneo, and western Asia; the tiger in China and Japan; the boar in Turkey and Greece; the hyena, leopard, and crocodile in Africa; and the jaguar in South America.

Lycanthropy, according to psychiatrists, is a kind of mental illness that causes the victim to feel like a carnivore, a predatory beast, and to act accordingly. Religio-phenomenologically, it is interpreted as being connected with the idea of the free or detachable soul that can leave the body, assume the shape of an animal, wander around, and return again to the body. This belief is attested in Serbia, Sweden, Livonia, and Estonia. It was reported from Livonia in the nineteenth century that when the soul of a werewolf was abroad on its particular business, its body was lying dead as a stick or stone. However, if during this time the body were moved to another place or even if the position were accidentally shifted, the soul could not find its way back and had to remain in the body of a wolf until death. Oskar Loorits reports that "the soul of an evil man or sorcerer wandered around as a wolf causing damage to other people, while the man himself slept."

Occasionally, Latvian werewolves function as protectors of communities. At a witch trial in 1691, as Leopold Kretzenbacher reports, an old Latvian, Thies (Matiss), claimed to be a werewolf, a "dog of God" (*Dievs*), and to work with his companions against the sorcerers, who were allied with the devil (*velns*). The devil, through sorcerers, took fertility (blessing) away into hell, but the werewolves stole it back. The preceding year, the Russian werewolves had arrived earlier at hell and had taken away the blessing of Latvian land. Therefore, there was a good crop in Russia, but the Latvians had a crop failure. This year, the Latvian werewolves had come sooner, and they expected Latvia to have a fertile flax year.

The tendency of people to believe in good werewolves who counteract the reign of evil through the powers of good can be compared with similar beliefs about vampires. Thus, according to Balkan belief, the classic vampire has an antagonist, a "good" vampire ("vampire's son"), who is destined to detect and kill the bad vampires. Kretzenbacher reports that the Russian villages are said to have two kinds of vampires—one bad and the other good: "More frequently encountered was the belief that while a dead vampire destroyed people, a live

one, on the contrary, defended them. Each village had its own vampire, as if it were a guard, protecting the inhabitants from his dead companions.”

Felix J. Oinas

See Also Assault, Supernatural; Magic; Shape-Shifters; Transformation; Vampire.

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Women's Folklore

Folklore and “women” are terms that have been linked in scholarship only recently. Expressive, artistic behavior, whether verbal or plastic, used to be considered an activity exclusive to men. Women’s expressive behavior was assigned categories such as “decorative” or “utilitarian,” thus denying the conscious manipulation of form and content for effect or aesthetics.

The American Folklore Society was founded in 1888; from the beginning, women scholars were represented in its publications as well as in other popular and scholarly publications of the time. However, the perceptions of women’s contributions, whether as scholars or consultant/informers, were limited by prevailing ideas about women and their abilities.

Today, women are actively challenging the preconceptions about themselves and their scholarship, sometimes with a strident rhetoric, sometimes with a comical or ironic attitude, but always with a plethora of knowledge and references. Indeed, the adage about women having to be “better than” to be considered “equal to” is demonstrated repeatedly in women’s reports of their difficulties in being

taken seriously and being published in premier outlets. While we like to think that our times are considerably different from those of a hundred years ago, in practice we now find many similarities to the situation that existed when folklore first became a scholarly presence on the American scene.

Early collectors, whether men or women, preferred to gather stories from men, unless, of course, the stories concerned hearth and home, charms or lullabies, children's games or cooking, which, it was believed, were the province of women. Despite the fact that the Grimm brothers reported collecting their fairy tales primarily from serving-women, men were believed to be the bearers of the important and lengthy traditions, while women were believed to be more capable of, and interested in, things that surrounded what was considered to be their primary role—household duties and child care. Even when women's knowledge was demonstrated to be superior to that of men in a particular genre, the words of men were preferred.

Gradually, during the 1950s and 1960s, information about women in journals or books was expanded to include their roles in cultures other than those founded on Western European models. At times some of this information related to folklore.



African American woman doing laundry with a scrub board and tub, girl stirring pot with three other children on the ground watching, and a woman in the background spreading laundry, ca. 1900. (Library of Congress)

But usually it was folklore *about* women rather than the kinds of expressive behavior in which women engaged, whether in groups of women, women with children, or mixed gender groups. Occasionally, there was a single publication focusing on the repertoire of this female storyteller or that woman singer; such publications were exceptions to an otherwise firm rule that significant folklore study was predicated on working with men's knowledge.

By the late 1960s and the early 1970s, the situation was changing rapidly. It is not a coincidence that this change occurred coterminously with the so-called women's movement and court cases affirming the rights of minorities and women. Many graduate school programs, previously de facto closed to women, began to reserve slots for women in order to ensure the continuance of federal funding for other sectors of the university.

Older women, those with children, and those who lived on the margins longing for the opportunities of their brothers and husbands were represented in disproportionate numbers in these early graduate classes. These women, predominantly in our country at the University of Texas in Austin, at Stanford University, at the University of Pennsylvania, and at Indiana University–Bloomington, had life experiences and artistic/folkloristic repertoires that were neither described in literature nor accorded legitimacy. These women began to be heard in the mid-1970s, when there was a sudden explosion of literature about women, their folklore, their roles, their self-perceptions, and even their bawdy jokes, stories, and tales—more often than not with men as the butt of the joke. With the increasing availability of funding for women and their concerns, stories began to circulate of the women's folklore from this country or that and its similarities and differences compared with American folklore. Much of this cross-cultural work, however, was not published until the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Also during the late 1960s and early 1970s, women's groups were formed; originally these were consciousness-raising or rap groups, but now they are termed support groups and have generalized to society as a whole. Women delighted in finding their commonalities, especially in sharing their ways of relating experiences about such commonalities in these groups. Some of the earlier published and scholarly work in women's folklore grew from such associations of women.

The numbers of books, articles, and chapters on women and their folklore being produced in the mid- and later 1980s reached such proportions as to make it impossible for any one person to keep adequate track of the literature without devoting full time to it. Primarily the work has focused on women's roles and women's expressions of and about them in cultures throughout the world as well as in our own country. There has also been a coming together of feminism and scholarship. Women have been freed, one hopes permanently, from the bonds of being passive to the recognition that women are active agents, often agencies as

well, for the enactment of their lives. Even in repressed situations, such as can be seen in some back-to-the-past Middle Eastern cultures, women scholars are demonstrating the expressive ways in which women manipulate and comment upon their condition through folkloristic resources.

Theoretical work in women's folklore currently follows the same trends and paradigms as does any other subject in an academic discipline. There are those studies that focus on ethnography, on a Marxist perspective, on a structural presentation, on a semiotic interpretation, or on a performance enactment, as well as those that take a tone of literary criticism; additionally, many works reinterpret past canon on the basis of contemporary insight. Previously taboo topics, such as lesbianism, receive their fair share of scholarly attention and are now publishable, whereas a few years ago they were not—save in the so-called underground press. What were once accepted social “facts,” as, for instance, the concept of universal male dominance, have recently been shown to be as much a product of our own mythology concerning proper roles of men and women as they were social reality. The genres and paradigms that have been utilized to discuss women and their folklore or to trivialize them both are more reflective of the scholars and the zeitgeist than they are of the actual situation obtaining in any one time or place.

In the late 1980s, attention is being given to the effects of colonialism, of cultural recidivism, of feminism, of text versus performance, of performance of text, and of alphabetic literacy on the production, recording, and interpretation of folklore and women. The topic of folklore and women now encompasses folklore of women, folklore about women, women's folklore, and metafolklore—the folklore about the folklore.

In 1888, understanding of folklore and women was a foregone conclusion: everyone knew the kinds of folklore women had and the areas in which they could be expected to demonstrate competency, and everyone knew that real folklore was a possession of men. It took almost one hundred years, until 1972, before the first scholarly session on women's folklore was presented at the American Folklore Society meetings; two years later, in 1974, the interest was so intense that there was a double session (four hours of papers). In 1986, the society's annual meeting featured an entire day of scholarly papers on women's folklore, with multiple sessions running concurrently. Unfortunately, few men attended the sessions. This précis of the American Folklore Society's record concerning folklore and women replicates the situation in other disciplines and scholarship in general.

Five women have had a significant impact upon the thinking of those who write about folklore and women: Barbara Babcock and Claire R. Farrer, whose books and articles are repeatedly cited; Marta Weigle, who presents images of women from many cultures throughout history; and, Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo

and Louise Lamphere, whose anthropological collection provided the stimulus for much of the research now seeing the light of publication.

Claire R. Farrer

See Also Family Folklore; Gender.

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Worldview

The way in which a person or group views the world; the complex interaction of culture, language, and mental constructs utilized to make sense of the world around us; alternately, *Weltanschauung*, or the view of life, philosophy of life, or ideology. Studies of worldview focus on how culture and language are utilized to interpret and mediate the experiences and sensory data from the world at large.

The concept of worldview is understood to be a complex idea that can vary greatly from group to group. Most research views worldview as a function of patterns of native language and group culture. The patterns are internalized within the members of a group by way of group interaction. These patterns are passed through each succeeding generation and become an integral part of the life of the group. Indeed, it is improbable that the people of any given culture can understand the world without these native patterns. The development of an individual's worldview begins in infancy and continues throughout life. Along with the complexities of linguistic development, the individual is subjected to a myriad of behavioral and perceptual norms. One group may develop fine distinctions between colors, another might focus on linear forms, and another might focus on temporal and spatial relations to each other and to other groups. Thus, each culture utilizes a different methodology for processing perceived reality; reality is processed through filters of language and culturally provided ideas. These learned patterns allow members of a group to orient themselves to the world

around them in terms they understand. Euro-Americans, for example, tend to orient themselves in terms of linear relations to people and places, a concept they begin to internalize early on and that is reinforced through regular interaction with others from their group.

Linguist and anthropologist Edward Sapir developed a concept of culture as something internalized by the individuals who make up a given group to create a “world of meanings.” This world of meanings was something that the individual abstracted through language and interaction with other members of the group, and it conditioned the way in which these individuals as a group were able to build a worldview. From this and the later Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which holds that language affects the way in which worldviews are perceived, grew the more recent ideas on worldview.

One key to understanding the worldview of a group is through its folklore. If worldview can be understood to be the mediating filter through which an individual or group perceives the world, then traditional renderings of the group’s orderly principles (e.g., myth, belief systems) can be utilized as the key to apprehending its worldview. More recent research attends to the fact that observers, too, have their own worldviews and that these act on what the observers perceive. This informed perspective, sometimes called “new reflexivity,” builds the observer’s bias into any discussion of worldview. By recognizing this double mediation, a more accurate picture of worldview is believed to emerge.

Randal S. Allison

See Also Acculturation; Linguistic Approach; Myth.

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Xeroxlore

Also known as *photocopylore*, signifies traditional items reproduced by xerographic or analogous means that subvert the primary intentions of those in ostensible control of such higher-level technologies. Examples of devices so employed include printing presses, photographic printing, mimeograph machines, photocopy machines, computer printers, computer networks, fax machines, and coin-minting presses. Any device that reproduces an item or transmits alphanumeric data may be employed in this folk practice, and most are known to have been so used.

Xeroxlore, because it is the product of the unofficial use of technology, reflects the customary practices of those who use it rather than the intentions of the institutions that own or control it. Xeroxlore is also affected by its host technology and often reflects folk attitudes to its institutional context. Thus, xeroxlore usually contains a visual component and often parodies the values of the host institution through fake memos or the values of dominant culture more generally through obscene Christmas cards and the like. An example of xeroxlore, reproduced by photocopy machines on paper, by coin-elongating machines on U.S. cents, and by private mints on one-ounce silver ingots, reads:

Big cats are dangerous,
[representation of a tiger]
but a little pussy never hurt anyone.

Although the technology often serves more seemingly innocuous ends, such as the circulation of favorite recipes, chain letters, and favorite published cartoons, even these are reproduced despite official restrictions on what may be copied and in violation of copyright laws; their circulation may also violate postal regulations. It is a small step from such unofficial uses of the technology to the photocopying of body parts.

Just as the technology is an extension of human faculties, so also is xeroxlore an extension of traditional oral joking practices and of the making of material culture, novelty items in particular. The folk make their own uses of technological innovations as they become available, just as they always have. The fragmentary record of the past includes typeset folk verse and World War II-era blueprints of female nudes with their body parts labeled as if they were airplanes. Present practice

includes use of facsimile machines to transmit photocopied materials, with an increasing proportion of pictorial material that the technology permits and whole-sale circulation of xeroxlore by means of the Internet.

Although xeroxlore is an international phenomenon, the product of whatever technology is available for its duplication and dissemination, all items of xeroxlore are not equally widespread. Xeroxlore is frequently adapted to different cultural contexts, but many items are of interest to specific groups of people only, be they employees of a particular corporation, the citizens of a particular country, or the speakers of a particular language. Xeroxlore represents age-old human practices carried out by means of and influenced by modern inventions, but despite the international availability of identical technologies, xeroxlore exhibits the same types and perhaps as much variation, as any other traditional practice, based on race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, political ideology, and so forth.

Michael J. Preston

See Also Cyberculture; Legend, Urban.

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